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ABSTRACT

Volume 13 of the journal of the Movement for Canadian Literacy is presented. The volume consists of 4 issues containing articles on the following literacy education topics: (1) putting literacy on the Canadian public agenda; (2) efforts to animate learner participation; (3) building networks for literacy workers; (4) literacy research activity; (5) the needs assessment; (6) native Canadian languages and the promotion of adult literacy; (7) francophone and anglophone literacy in Canada; (8) first language literacy and multiculturalism; (9) discovering learning preferences; (10) extending writing competence for adult learners; and (11) development of good practice guidelines in literacy education. Accounts of literacy education programs across the provinces, news briefs, and notices of new resources appear in some issues. All articles in issues 2 through 4 are presented in both English and French; articles in issue 1 are in English only. (MSE)

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Joan Mansfield

THE MOVEMENT FOR CANADIAN LITERACY
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VOLUME 13, NO. 1 SPRING 1988

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In This Issue

Moving Into the Next Decade

Last October the Movement for Canadian Literacy, to mark its 10th anniversary, organized a one-day National Literacy Seminar in Toronto. The Seminar identified three broad themes for discussion: (1) Putting Literacy on the Canadian Agenda, with workshops on the public image of literacy/illiteracy, policy needs and partnerships; (2) Animating Learner Participation, with workshops on learners shaping programs and learner conferences; and (3) Building Networks for Literacy Workers, with workshops on community-based program networks, relationships between community and formal programs, and resource networks.

The National Seminar was an ambitious undertaking and, in retrospect, general agreement on any of the issues was perhaps an unrealistic goal. Workshops were asked to formulate recommendations, but it soon became clear that the time limitations on discussion and the widely divergent perspectives made consensus difficult, if not impossible. The Seminar was, however, a starting point for new efforts in literacy advocacy and policy formation and a unique opportunity for literacy workers from across the country to exchange experiences and views, and to move a large step closer to being a united force.

This issue of LITERACY/ALPHABETISATION focuses on the general themes of the National Seminar. Some articles are direct reflections on the Seminar and MCL; others are on specific issues discussed at the National Seminar, though not themselves referring to that particular discussion.

The articles in this issue reflect some of the feeling of the National Seminar - the sense that perceptions of what is going on in literacy depend very much on where you are in Canada (for instance, Audrey Thomas' and Susan Hoddinott's very different assessments of the acceptance of illiteracy as a public issue in the past 10 years); the lack of a clear definition or ordering of problems and needs in many regions (as evidenced in Richard Darville's list of policy issues not addressed at the policy session). The need for exposure to models of organization and delivery in other provinces both as a means of gaining a national perspective and of evaluating or valuing one's own involvement (as Tannis Atkinson's article on community-based networks demonstrates); and the need for more recognition and discussion of the range of needs in literacy level education (Eileen Shannon's and Eileen Joyce Couchene's articles).

The discussion in this issue only touches the surface of the debates which were begun at the national Seminar. All of the areas of concern deserve and require considerably more space for reflection and analysis. There is no doubt, for instance, that the presentation/public image of illiteracy has a significant impact on how governments react and so should be an important area of concern for MCL; that the range of needs in literacy education requires further exploration and analysis if MCL is to address all facets of undereducation; and that partnerships in literacy need to be examined and evaluated.

The organization of the National

Seminar may have assumed a degree of communication and commonality of experience and perspective in the regions which evidently does not exist. Provincial and territorial groups were asked to meet and ratify or comment on recommendations coming out of the workshops. The exercise in many cases only served to demonstrate the isolation of many literacy workers in their own regions, let alone in the nation. All of which makes MCL's task of clarifying issues and formulating policy - policy which both reflects the concerns of the regions and provides direction - the more urgent.

At the Quebec meeting of the MCL Board in February, a priority list was agreed upon by vote for the coming year. The clear choice of the majority of the Board for the main area of priority was development and promulgation of a policy on literacy provision. The second most important priority area defined was the sponsorship of provincial and territorial learner conferences, clearly seen as a route to the definition of policy shaped by those whom it will affect.

If any gains are to be made in the current climate of government and wider social concern with illiteracy, MCL must take a clear stand and present firm and coherent policy directions which will ensure that learners have the benefit of full access to the best programs possible, programs which reflect their needs and priorities.

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Erratum

The editorial, IN THIS ISSUE, in the last edition of LITERACY/ALPHABETISATION was attributed solely to Richard Darville. It was in fact prepared jointly by Tannis Atkinson and Richard Darville of the MCL Publications Committee.

MARIANNE WILLIAMS

President's Message

Welcome to the second decade of the Movement for Canadian Literacy!

Some of you will have been members in the Movement for those ten years and others will be newcomers. We need all of you to continue your support and to introduce new members to MCL.

We celebrated our birthday with a National Literacy Seminar. During those ten years as a totally voluntary, non-profit organization we carried out our mandate to provide a forum for discussion of literacy as an issue in Canada, to disseminate information and to advocate, promote and lobby for more resources for literacy programming across Canada. There were rough spots - we have come through them and now want to move on.

As of this year we have funding from the Secretary of State to open a national office and to hire a national coordinator and one administrative support staff. The mandate and tasks have not changed, but the energy and organizational structure to carry on the work and to expand the membership of the Movement has increased.

The provincial literacy organizations which are our links to the local and regional levels are high priority connections. How can we promote and serve the needs provincially, regionally and locally through these vital organizational links?

There are pressing needs that are related to specific groups and cultures within Canada: native peoples, those with special learning needs, and the variety of Black cultural groups in Canada. How do we emphasize these needs? How do we highlight the needs of the multicultural Canadian community where the need for literacy exists for French or English as a Second Language/Literacy and Mother Tongue Literacy programs? Are there special programs needed for women in Canada? How does the national literacy organization work with the Quebec and national francophone community? If we highlight and emphasize these needs, can we be sure that resources, support and expanded quality programs will follow?

Many of you have told me about the tenacity that you must exercise to hold on to the meagre programs that you have. Literacy work is a vocation for you and you continue with it far beyond the call of duty.

The Movement can speak only with the voice of its own membership. Your needs and your struggles are the source of its voice. It is our job as an organization with an elected board of directors linked into provincially, regionally and locally representative bodies to amplify the message from these sources.

We welcome your support. We urge you to inform your representatives and demand that they report back to you. We all know that the process of change is slow, but we also know that it is certain. Literacy is an issue in the minds of citizens and politicians and now we must turn that awareness into the political will to satisfy the needs of learners across Canada.

Literacy workers, tutors and teachers, volunteers are the catalysts to change. The Movement is the medium for the catalysts to act. We are all in this together!

Marianne Williams

PUTTING LITERACY ON THE CANADIAN AGENDA

At the 1987 National Literacy Seminar, three workshops dealt with this theme. "The Public Image of Il/literacy" was facilitated by John O'Leary of Frontier College. "Literacy Policy" was facilitated by Theresa MacNeill of the Canadian Association for Adult Education. "Building Parnerships for Literacy Work" was facilitated by Nancy Jennings of the Canadian Association for Community Education.

These workshops looked at those linked activities that occur through media; in government decision-making processes; and among literacy groups, business, labour and community groups, to push "the issue."

The three articles that follow look at aspects of these activities. John O'Leary casts a skeptical eye over the literacy movement's understanding of the media, and our ability to use it skillfully. Richard Darville invites the literacy movement to dream and act to shape literacy policy that meets needs as literacy workers and learners know them. Linda Young portrays one model for literacy partnerships - a new Toronto program for literacy work as labour education. All these articles, we think, raise as many questions as they answer, and should help to push forward the discussions about putting literacy on the Canadian agenda started at the National Seminar.

JOYCE WHITE

1990 • International Literacy Year

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1990 as International Literacy Year (ILY). UNESCO is the UN organization responsible for promotion and coordination of ILY activities throughout the world through the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE).

The purpose of the International Year is to bring the problem of illiteracy to the forefront of public attention and thus encourage action by governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to launch or expand literacy initiatives in an effort to make "World Literacy" a reality. The provision of basic literacy through educational systems or outside of them is on the whole a national responsibility. But international cooperation has proved itself to be indispensable to national efforts. Developing countries need advice and resources from abroad, industrialized nations find inspiration and enlightenment in the exchange of information and specialists from overseas.

In pursuit of this goal, ICAE has convened a Task Force which first met in Toronto in October 1987. That meeting was attended by 20 men and women who represented national and regional adult education associations and literacy groups from the international community. Canada was represented

by Ian Morrison (CAAE), Joyce White (MCL) and Louise Miller (Regroupement des Groupes Populaires en Alphabetisation du Qu/bec).

The objective of the Task Force is to ensure active cooperation of non-governmental organizations in the planning and activities of International Literacy Year. By bringing together different international organizations concerned with literacy, the Task Force will provide: (1) a forum for discussion of plans and information exchange; (2) a mechanism for fostering the active participation of NGOs and their networks in their respective countries.

The Secretary of State for Canada has promised Canada's active support and a continued leadership role for Canada in launching international initiatives to promote literacy.

Towards National Strategies

The National Literacy Seminar was only a beginning. The Cedar Glen Declaration is a sound public policy statement. International Literacy Year is a "summons to action." Strengthening the literacy movement in Canada should be our goal for ILY. How can we do that?

Development of national action plans is dependent upon effective work at the local level and needs coordination between national and local levels. But what is happening at the grass-roots level? Does your local coalition, literacy grouups, learners' advisory group, community or union group have plans to promote ILY? How can we in MCL help you? National initiatives must have grass roots support for constructive social change.

The next meeting of the ILY Task Force is in June and your ideas, suggestions and concerns are needed for that meeting. At the National Literacy Seminar, there was agreement that there is a wealth of valuable ideas and information to be shared if we have a vehicle to do it. The MCL journal LITERACY/ ALPHABETISATION is one such vehicle and the means which I will use to keep you informed about the International Task Force activities.

You are invited to share with us your information, ideas or suggestions for possible activities for ILY which could be included in a promotion kit to be compiled for International Literacy Year. This kit will be distributed throughout Canada. We look forward to hearing from you at the address below:

Joyce White, Chair, ILY Committee
Movement for Canadian Literacy,
9 St. Joseph Street, #304,
Toronto (Ontario) M4Y 1J6

SUSAN HODDINOTT

The Southam News Survey: Just Another Newfie Put-down?

THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF ILLITERACY IN NEWFOUNDLAND

In October 1987, Memorial University of Newfoundland hosted a public forum on illiteracy in St. John's. The panel was comprised of a local newspaper publisher who called attention to the Southam News literacy survey as evidence of the seriousness of the illiteracy problem in Newfoundland; the organizer of a new community-based literacy project in St. John's who discussed approaches to literacy education; an assistant deputy minister from the department responsible for literacy who outlined her department's efforts to secure Secretary of State funding for literacy; and a professor of education at Memorial University (and one-time member of the provincial House of Assembly) who started his remarks by denying the existence of illiteracy (meaning the inability to read and write) in the province. He dismissed the "grade 9 definition" as a way of "putting down Newfoundlanders" and as "self-righteous name-calling". The professor, Dr. Hubert Kitchen, bases his position on two beliefs which are widely held here:

(1) Problems generally assumed to result from low levels of education are not problems for the individual or society in and of themselves (that is, literacy and the independence that it allows have no particular merit); rather they have become problems only because of rampant credential inflation (with the employment barriers and social expectation it creates) and because society chooses to label those who have not made the grade. The assumption is that they suffer more from the label than from the limited choices and dependency associated with illiteracy.

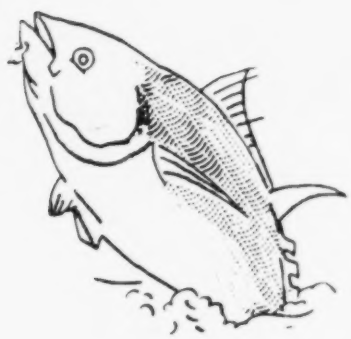
(2) Newfoundland (and, perhaps he would argue, other rural and/or underdeveloped regions) has a place for illiterates because Newfoundland society is supportive and tolerant and recognizes many types of learning and many forms of education. In his own words, Newfoundland has ".. the remnants of a unique culture, not based on books .. (but on) other, equally legitimate ways of learning." His vision is a very romantic one. His fishermen live in a rustic paradise where they are required only to exercise their craft (or art) - at which there are none better - and appreciate/manipulate nature.

In Dr. Kitchen's Newfoundland, international navigation regulations apparently do not apply. Fishermen do not need to take courses and qualifying exams in order to expand their navigation or fishery technology skills and increase their earning power or simply keep up with the times - and the new regulations. Nor are they ever work-injured and forced to seek less physically demanding employment.

His romanticism takes on another colour, however, when one considers his position (as laid out in a published response to the report of the 1986 Royal Commission on

Employment and Unemployment) on government spending on education and on the division of labour in society in general. Briefly put, he thinks governments cannot afford to spend more money on education and, in any case, if too large a proportion of the population is well-educated there will simply be nobody to do the menial tasks. Isn't the logical conclusion to this reasoning that society needs a body of undereducated, if not illiterate, people?

Dr. Kitchen's position differs from that of a significant proportion of Newfoundlanders only in the bald assertions and the provocativeness of his stance. For at that same forum, references to the Southam survey invariably met with challenges to its accuracy. Several members of the audience, with some support from the panel, argued that it simply was an exaggeration. Yet nobody gave any convincing argument for doubting the survey's accuracy. Most simply 'felt' it was incorrent, the numbers of illiterates too high. Others accused the survey of cultural bias - both the survey and the surveyors - 'come from away.'



In fact, it is rare to hear the Southam survey discussed in Newfoundland unprefaced by references to its presumed inaccuracy and cultural inappropriateness. The province's education minister, in an interview on the subject with the St. John's Evening Telegram, discounted the significance of the survey "because of cultural differences. (..)It asked questions which had no relation to outport Newfoundland." Remarks in a recent research paper/literature review presented to the department responsible for literacy by Memorial University's Extension Division echo his response: "This analysis is questionable ... literacy skills necessary for effective functioning in a rural outport may not be sufficient for the same individual living in a large urban centre," (incidentally, rural Newfoundland has one of the highest out-migration rates in the country) and "This information has to be studied with a grain of salt." Curiously, such confident undermining of the Southam survey continues in the absence of any other survey which might have provided evidence to refute its conclusions or give just cause to question it.

The irony (and perhaps an underlying cause) of the public denial of illiteracy in Newfoundland is the fact that illiteracy is so widespread. Everybody knows somebody who has a low level of education and who likely has low literacy skills (despite such anomalies as the deputy minister responsible for literacy, quoted in the Southam report as saying he had "never actually met an illiterate"). Perhaps people are reluctant to group grandparents, parents, siblings, and others in the profoundly stigmatized category labelled 'illiterate.' The term itself is culturally loaded and, in

general usage, synonymous with ignorant, stupid, helpless. (Is there one of us who has not used the term in a derogatory sense?) It is certain that, until literacy is generally understood and presented as an education issue, we can expect people to defend their friends and relations (and themselves) against the 'charge.'

The fact that education did not become compulsory in Newfoundland until confederation with Canada in 1949, and that high-school-level education did not become universally accessible until the late '60s, also means that a high proportion of those who show up in the census reports as undereducated are not in fact illiterate. Thousands of people finished school in grade 8 because school finished in grade 8. A high proportion of those had sufficient literacy skills by the 8th grade to function quite well and to continue to build on those skills outside of the formal education system.

Inevitably, when the statistics on illiteracy as defined in terms of grade achievement are raised, people will call attention to all those they know who have only grade 8 or less, but who are quite literate. This has more than once been the Government response in the legislature to Opposition questions about initiatives to deal with illiteracy. In 1986, a minister retorted, rather cryptically, "Not being able to read and write doesn't mean you're illiterate!" The speech appeared in the local press without editorial comment.

Perhaps something of this attitude (and problem) prevails in other regions of the country. It is possible that, no matter how the issue is presented by literacy lobbyists, the media and so on, a certain defensiveness will manifest itself, especially in underdeveloped regions already burdened with a collective sense of inferiority. However, there can be no doubt that the public presentation of the issue influences people's responses. As long as phrases such as "the cancer of illiteracy" abound and direct and largely unfounded connections are made between illiteracy and crime, low productivity, social dependency, and so on, it is only natural for populations to want to exclude themselves from the description.

A most insidious result of the denial of illiteracy as a problem and of the calling up of what is essentially Newfoundland 'national' pride in defence of charges of "most illiterate province" is the 'out' it gives governments. For, as long as the argument is still not settled - as long as there is still a question of whether illiteracy is a major problem or not, governments do not have to act.

SUSAN HODDINOTT is Literacy Instructor and Coordinator at Avalon Community College, St. John's, Newfoundland. She represents Newfoundland/Labrador on the Board of MCL and is a member of the MCL Publications Committee.

RICHARD DARVILLE

The Literacy Movement and Literacy Policy: A Dream

Now that literacy has become a buzzword in political and bureaucratic circles, the question is what will be done and who will define it.

Last October's National Literacy Seminar included a session on literacy policy. It made a number of recommendations. These were mainly of four kinds:

* Specific policies should be grounded in broad goals - universal access to literacy education, as one means of creating a more democratic society.

* Literacy workers and learners should have a voice in policy formation.

* Learners should be able to choose from a range of program types, all of which should be adequately and equitably funded. (There was disagreement in the session about whether "range of program types" should be defined, and specifically whether it should include both formal and community programs.)

* Learners should have resources such as financial support, child care and transportation.

All this, as far as it goes, is laudable. It expresses the ambitions of literacy workers who have struggled hard for years to reach the people we do reach, and to have our voices heard in the policy-making process.

However, there are limitations to our discussion and a certain modesty to our recommendations. Such limitations and such modesty are characteristic of literacy groups, including the Movement for Canadian Literacy, because we think within the horizons of our programs. Literacy organizations are firmly oriented to programs and practice, and this gives us the strength that we have. However, it also gives us weaknesses when it comes to policy-making and politics.

About policy, as about most issues discussed at the National Literacy Seminar, much more discussion is needed. This discussion should stay in touch with program-level outcomes we want from policy. It should also move away, towards the policy-level means - funding, goals, mandates. Ministerial and organizational arrangements - that will determine whether we get those program-level outcomes.

Imagine, dream, that the literacy movement has clear and collectively developed statements on policy matters.

* We have a conception of how literacy demands and opportunities are changing in workplaces and in social and political life. Thus we can help to define the broad goals that literacy work should serve, and the roles of literacy workers, business, labour and educational institutions.

* We define the elements of quality programming - tutor/teacher education, ongoing tutor support, diverse learning materials, articulation between programs - and the cost of those elements of quality. Thus we can define the funding levels that are adequate for quality programming.

* We can argue advantages of community, workplace and institutional bases for literacy work, and their proper mix. We can define the range of program types that should be available to serve the range of learners' needs.

* We have learned how school systems let pupils come out not reading and writing well. Thus we can contribute to defining what must happen in public schools to ensure their students' literacy.

* We have thought through the workings of government itself well enough to have a say in the funding and organizational arrangements that will provide the variety and quality of programs we need. We can argue:

  * the economic and educational policies that now work to produce illiteracy, and the changes to existing education, employment and social assistance arrangements that would provide learners with resources they should have;

  * the consultative or advisory bodies that should shape literacy policy locally, provincially and federally, and the representation that literacy workers and learners should have on them;

  * the federal and provincial ministries, and the educational institutions and community groups, that should be involved in literacy; and perhaps even the portion of post-school education funding that should go to adult literacy.

This is a big dream., bigger than any of us can really now dream in detail and in living colour. How could we make such a dream come true - through what actions?

One action to stimulate discussion would be simply to gather and distribute policy documents and information about literacy work across the country. We don't currently have a collection of documents, let alone basic information on all the provinces' literacy goals, delivery mechanisms, funding levels, numbers of learners served, and support services. There are major differences in the level and organization of programming across the country and it would advance out thinking if people in all the provinces and territories could learn about and reflect on each others' experience.

Another action to stimulate discussion would be provincial and national symposia at which literacy organizations, community groups, business, labour and researchers could make and debate proposals about issues central to literacy policy.

Even these modest actions are dreams. But the dream continues with new people brought into the discussion, vigorous debate, and finally enough consensus that we can draft policy recommendations.

This is the dream. People who do literacy work say what policy will let it be done right. Like it or not, politicians and policy-makers cannot ignore it. Awakening from the dream, there is a lot of work to be done.

RICHARD DARVILLE has been working in the adult literacy field since 1976, teaching, writing, consulting and working organizationally in the ABE Association of BC and in MCL.

MARY NORTON

1990 ... and then?

A series of joint announcements have been made by Secretary of State David Crombie and provincial government Ministers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, British Columbia and Newfoundland. In these provinces, federal grants of $75,000 to $100,000 have been matched with provincial allocations to support such literacy education initiatives as an Adult Literacy Contact Centre, media publicity, materials development, and literacy provision in remote, northern communities. At the time of writing, it was anticipated that announcements would soon be made about similar initiatives in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

There are strong indications that these joint initiatives are forerunners. So the purpose of this article is to acquaint readers with the nature of the federal-provincial initiatives, and to promote discussion and participation in planning for future ones. What follows are a review of federal government actions on literacy thus far, a commentary on the federal-provincial initiatives, and some suggestions about how we might participate in shaping events which are bound to follow. (2)

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

The joint literacy initiatives are rooted in the October 1, 1986 Throne Speech which committed the federal government to action on literacy (3). Following the throne speech, and in consultation with "people in the field", a Literacy Working Group within the Secretary of State developed a Discussion Paper on Literacy. The paper sought to "define the problem of illiteracy; to list the needs as presented by the community; and to identify new federal initiatives consistent with the constituional responsibility of the provinces for education" (4). The paper was distributed to representatives of literacy interest groups and other selected individuals, and on June 8, Minister Crombie met with these individuals to hear their responses to the Paper.

> OTTAWA - Alberta Deputy Premier and Minister of Advanced Education Dave Russell and Secretary of State David Crombie tional federal provincial funding totalling $156,000 for new and ongoing literacy initiatives in the province...
>
> (1)

In September, 1987, Crombie announced that a National Literacy Secretariat had been established to work closely "with the provinces, volunteer and community groups, labour and the private sector" (5). Richard Nolan and Ron Faris have since been appointed Executive Director and Associate Executive Director, respectively, of the new Secretariat. They are a team to note: Richard Nolan has experience in the federal civil service - prior to his new appointment, he was Executive Director of the Disabled Persons Secretariat - and is apparently quite effective in moving policy documents through the federal system. Dr. Ron Faris has counterpart experience at the provincial government level. He was most recently Director of Continuing Education in British Columbia, and has been reponsible for developing and applying adult

education policy in B.C. and Saskatchewan. Their appointments suggest a seriousness about the federal governments intentions at this time.

Federal government action on adult literacy is not a new phenomenon, of course. Twenty years ago it introduced the Basic Training for Skills Development program, which provided for instruction at the "literacy" level. But never has the action been of this scope and profile. Factors which seem to be shaping the current move include: a dramatic growth in public awareness about adult illiteracy (6); an increase in lobbying by interest groups; and the forthcoming International Literacy Year in 1990 (7). These factors offer some suggestions about the federal government's motivation for action on literacy at this time. Further indicators of intentions are suggested in the nature of the joint initiatives, and the process through which they were developed.

THE JOINT INITIATIVES

In September, Mr. Crombie also indicated that he would be making some specific announcements about joint initiatives; the first of these announcements followed soon after. In fact, as director of the Literacy Working Group, Mr. Nolan, had been meeting with provincial government staff to invite proposals for projects which would support adult literacy education. The projects being funded are listed on the next page.

In inviting proposals, Mr. Nolan suggested guidelines related to the nature of the projects, project sponsorship, and matching grants. The projects were to be term-certain, and they were to support literacy education, rather than provide instruction directly. Projects were to be sponsored by non-government agencies. And, the province had to match the federal grant. (8)

Meetings about the projects were between federal government and provincial government staff. (Where people from the field have been consulted about projects, it has been at the initiation of the province or local Secretary of State staff.) At the same time, project funding is only being made available to non-government groups. Both moves likely reflect a regard for the provincial constitutional responsibility for education, but additional motives are suggested. It seems that the federal governments intent is to prompt provincial governments to take responsibilty for literacy education, and Working through the provincial governments, rather than directly with the non-government groups, provides the avenue for prompting provincial governments to taking responsibility, and the concept of matching grants requires action. Aiming at the non-government groups can support development of a lobby for literacy. And, the focus on funding infrastructure-type programs, such as conferences and resource services, can also support organizing efforts. Further, the focus does not set up the same expectations for long-term commitment that support of direct instruction would.

Federal- Provincial Joint Initiatives in Literacy Education

Province	Projects	Grant Recipient	Total Allocations Federal	Provincial	Provincial Source
British Columbia	Contact Literacy Centre Learners' conferences Consultation on Native education Revision of ESL/literacy tutoring resources	- ABE Association of B.C. - Conference sponsors	$100,000	$100,000	Additional allocation
Alberta	Literacy Trainers Development Program Public awareness resources	- Literacy Coordinators of Alberta - Alberta Association for Adult Literacy	$ 78,000	$ 78,000	Additional allocation
Saskatchewan	Public awareness campaign Learner materials Practitioner training	- Sask. Literacy Council	$ 75,000	$250,000	Planned allocation
Manitoba	Learners' conference Literacy workers' network Materials development Community development video Programs in north reserve communities (8 tutorial; 2 learning centres)	- Popular Theatre Alliance (PTA) - Literacy Workers' Alliance of Manitoba - PTA - project applicants	$100,000	$100,000	In-kind
Newfoundland	Office of Policy Development Literacy Conference Workshops for volunteers Promotional materials	- Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies	$ 80,000	$ 60,000	New allocation

MOVING TO 1990 ..

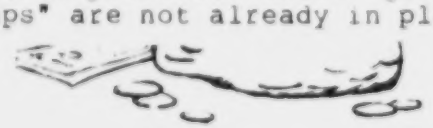
There are indications that federal support will continue and increase until at least 1990. An announcement about significant funding over three years is expected. Secretary of State staff have already been meeting with provincial government staff about possible funding requests, and it appears that the criteria for grants will be similar to ones already applied. The three year plan, along with the focus on promoting provincial government

action, suggests that federal government involvement may be short term.

The next three years may well be crucial to shaping literacy work in Canada. But if we want to have an active part in the unfolding history, then we must take some initiatives ourselves. We can:

1. Organize and make it known that we must participate in decision-making.

The extent to which "people in the field" have been consulted about the joint initiatives has varied depending in part on particular situations. In Saskatchewan, for instance, a provincial Literacy Council has been in place to advise on the provincial Literacy Campaign. Its 18 members represent a range of interest groups and were thus available to make recommendations about the federal-provincial initiatives. In contrast, the Newfoundland negotiations seem to have been held 'in camera.' The Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Adult Education, which represents adult and literacy education interests, was not contacted for suggestions, nor informed about projects. In a somewhat middle position, Alberta government staff were inclined to consult, but had neither the time nor a mechanism to do so - the non-government groups which are being funded for projects are but two of several regional and provincial interest groups. A need for groups to organize is recognized - should organizing be initiated by government or from the field? The same question applies to other provinces where "groups of groups" are not already in place.



2. Urge that consideration be given to local contexts.

In its Discussion Paper on Literacy, and in the criteria for joint-project funding, Secretary of State staff have emphasized the role of non-government and community-based groups. This may reflect a particular interest of the Secretary of State, but it may also reflect the influence of lobby groups in the non-governmment and community-based sector. However, it may not recognize differences in provincial contexts, particularly between central and western Canada. In the west, government-funded institutions and government itself have played major roles in provision of literacy education and in the development of community-based type programs. In these contexts, it would be appropriate that participation in initiatives be invited from the range of programs.

3. Urge that projects be undertaken according to thought-out principles.

There has been an urgency in announcing the joint initiatives which has required quick responses from the provincial governments. There may have been some pressure at the federal-government level for evidence of action on the Throne Speech statements. And, in order to argue for more money, the Secretary of State necessarily had to show that available allocations were being spent. Such urgency does not allow for careful or thought-through work. In the long-term projects must be considered in relation to an overall vision of what literacy eduction could be.

International Years serve to highlight issues and usually bring

an influx of funds and new initiatives. Too often, interest and funding decline with the end of the Year. Certainly the increased funding for literacy will allow for developing work and ideas in ways that have not been possible. But we need to view the next three years as an opportunity to imagine, act and reflect on better provision in the years after. We must look towards 1990 as a beginning.

In moving towards that year, we could do well in heeding something Minister Crombie has said:

".. people if given the chance .. have a great ability to look after themselves." (9)

Let's not prove him wrong.

Footnotes

(1) Press release. Ottawa, Department of the Secretary of State. January 18, 1988.

(2) Information in the report is derived from experience regarding the development of the Alberta projects, from interviews with provincial government and National Literacy Secretariat staff, and from the press releases announcing the joint initiatives. All the people interviewed were generous in providing information: Gwen Armstrong, B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training; Richard Bonokoski, Saskatchewan Department of Education; Johanna Faulk, Manitoba Department of Education; Ron Faris and Tamara Levine, National Literacy Secretariat. Susan Hoddinott, MCL Board Member for Newfoundland, provided information about developments in Newfoundland, in consultation with Catherine Gogan, Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies.

(3) In the October 1, 1986 Throne Speech, the federal government made a commitment to "work with the provinces, the private sector, and voluntary organizations to develop resources to ensure that Canadians have access to the literacy skills that are prerequisites for participation in our advanced economy".

(4) _____ "Discussion Paper on Literacy". Final Draft. Department of the Secretary of State. April 28, 1987.

(5) Press release. Department of the Secretary of State, September 1987.

(6) According to a Canadian Business Task Force survey on Literacy, Canadians rate illiteracy second among extremely important social issues.

(7) "This fall, the General Assembly of the United Nations will consider designating 1990 as the International Literacy Year. Canada will actively support this initiative and continue to assume a leadership role on the international scene". (Press release. Ottawa, Department of the Secretary of State, September 1987.)

(8) From the catalogue of projects, it is evident that there was some flexibility in applying the guidelines. For instance, in Newfoundland, the federal funds are being transferred directly to the provincial government, rather than to a non-government group, and in Manitoba, "in kind" services were accepted as a match for the federal money. However, in general, the criteria were applied.

(9) Goddard, John. "Forked Tongues". Saturday Night. February, 1988. p. 40.

MARY NORTON is a student and freelance adult literacy worker. She is currently engaged in work related to one of the Alberta joint initiatives.

JOHN O'LEARY

Literacy and the Media

The good news is that literacy is finally being reported as a serious issue in the Canadian media; the bad news is that the media does not always cover the issue properly. These were the two conclusions of a lively workshop held at the National Seminar.

A group of teachers, tutors and organizers were joined by several guests from the press - Rosalyn Farber (CBC TV), John Brooks (Toronto Star) and Jake Dougherty (Southam Press). We began with a discussion about the recent South Press report **BROKEN WORDS** which was published in newspapers across Canada in the autumn of 1987.

Brooks and Dougherty explained why Southam undertook the project ("Canadians, especially those under 30, are not subscribing to newspapers at the expected rate"), how it was done and what it means for the newspaper business. Southam intends to follow up with action in support of literacy. Dougherty is chairing a Southam committee to consider other activities and he invited people to contact him with ideas.

Farber showed us a video done by the CBC station in St. John's, Newfoundland. It included a series of brief items about literacy from various perspectives - a student, an employer and a teacher. She joined her colleagues from the press in emphasizing that the issue is receiving attention because it is seen as news, not because it is a worthy cause. The news angle which is getting the most attention is the connection between literacy and the economy. Both newspapers and TV frequently cover stories about unemployment, training, productivity, and so on as they relate to literacy.

For the balance of the workshop, the media people and the literacy people exchanged advice as follows:

Media people to literacy people:

* Learn more about dealing with the media. MCL should get staff or a volunteer committee with experience in this area.

* Don't expect coverage of an event because it interest you; for instance, an annual meeting is not big news most of the time. If you want coverage, work at telling the media about new angles or features of literacy.

* Keep the media informed via mailing lists, invitations to events, and so on. Even if we do not always respond, it helps keep the literacy movement in mind.

Literacy people to media people:

* Literacy people do not like the media's dominant image of ILLITERACY = HELPLESSNESS. It is inaccurate, and sensational.

* Media people should consider talking to more learners and report their views.

* Literacy people acknowledge the importance of the work of the media, especially the Southam Survey, in making the literacy case to the public and to government.

* There are many more stories to tell about literacy. Media people should not drop literacy, now that the extent of the problem has been reported.

JOHN O'LEARY, of Frontier College, was facilitator of the **PUBLIC IMAGE OF IL/LITERACY** workshop at the National Literacy Seminar.

AUDREY THOMAS

A Decade of Literacy Discussion – Some Reflections

Ten years is not a long span of time as far as human history goes, but it is long enough to develop a 'history' of attitudes and actions around a particular issue. The issue is adult illiteracy, and my assigned task is to comment on whether the terms of discussion have changed over the last ten years or so. The simple answers are: "Yes" and "No".

The latter answer can be addressed first. As a participant at the international and national seminars in Toronto in the fall of 1987, I felt the clock had suddenly been turned back ten years when I found myself in a workshop where the issues and questions being raised were more or less identical to the issues we struggled with at that time.

Policy and financial issues still occupy much time and debate. Advocacy/awareness, alliances/partnerships, professional development and material resources also do not take very long to surface in any literacy circle. Fears of burnout, and doubts about the validity of their work are also still prevalent, it seems, among literacy workers when they get together to share experiences and aspirations. Yet the environment has changed!

Adult illiteracy has come into public view. A bandwagon has developed. There are more players than ever before. Public interest has been aroused. The federal government has recognized the issue and initiated an action plan for literacy through the Department of the Secretary of State, and this is in addition to fairly substantial grants from other federal government departments. Learner conferences are becoming popular and student writings are being distributed. National, provincial, regional and program-specific networks are proliferating and despite the doubts, self-deprecations and other undercurrents, literacy workers do seem to have fun when they get together. All these changes have to affect the terms of discussion.

In the mid- and late 1970s, much energy and time went into ways of presenting the problem, getting attention for and acceptance of it. Workers, then, were operating in a climate of scepticism, incredulity, defensiveness and indifference. Functional illiteracy was synonymous with 'total illiteracy' in the general public's mind. Much effort went into clarifying the differences. It seems that the literacy movement has done a fairly adequate job there, for many people use the 'functional' approach now in their delineation of the problem and in program publicity.

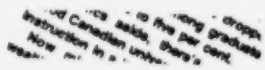
Hand-in-hand with the definitional problem went the statistical problem. "How big is the problem?" and "How many people are illiterate?" were commonly asked questions which could only be answered in relatively vague terms and with caveats attached as to interpretation which led back to the definitions! Now, the gross statistics seem to be accepted as an indicator whereas, then, many persons were incredulous and denied that the situation could be so bad. If there were indeed a problem, went one argument, it must be a person's fault, through lack of

motivation, for instance. Another argument - a kind of inverse defence - went something like this: "Well, with all the problems in the world, who'd want to read anyway? I'am rather sorry I can!" (This is a luxury of the 'haves' to claim that 'ignorance is bliss'.) This kind of situation required such frequent refutation that one began to feel like a needle trapped in the groove of a gramophone record.

The growth in the number of adult literacy programs in the last ten years is evidence of the need, and therein is the real refutation to arguments such as the above, which, given the cumulative public awareness over the last decade, I hope are no longer heard. In relation to the quantitative question, the 1987 Southam Survey has given its own version of the Adult Performance Level (APL) Study (Texas, 1973) to provide a different statistical base in addressing the problem.

As program expansion began to take place, philosophical questions surfaced. What were the ideological underpinnings of the program? What kinds of literacy were being taught and for what purposes? The answers to these questions affected program structure and setting, ways of tutoring or teaching, student participation and selection of materials. They also coloured attitudes towards funding and governmental bodies. There was a range of practice, but it often seemed that the extremes would always be at loggerheads and never able to agree.

As people acquired length of service in the field, however, it seemed that, although differences still existed, people were willing to listen to each other and to cooperate in networking and advocacy. There now appears to be an implicit acknowledgement that a range of practice should exist to meet the many diverse literacy needs, and people are concentrating on what they can do best. Philosophies and working principles have been honed with years of practice and the thinking in most cases has become more sophisticated. Practice has become geared to more specific adult groups, so that we have francophone literacy, native literacy, workplace literacy, literacy for street kids, literacy for inmates, literacy for the disabled and so on. Conferences for literacy learners are being planned. Catering to each of these constituences and events will, in turn, produce more questions and materials for reflection.



Many of the things that we hoped for and dreamed about a dozen years ago are now realities. We nurtured each other's hopes and the first steps in tackling the problem on many levels. We eagerly awaited news of the 'first' innovative programs or conferences in the various constituencies. Now, it seems, literacy is 'in' and the movement can afford expensive 'chic' conferences, to quote one long-time worker.

Literacy has gained acceptance by the media. Front page articles and editorials, while not exactly 'de rigueur', have been more usual. Eleven years ago, one had to be satisfied that a newspaper ran a couple of sentences buried among the 'miscellaneous' items on page 64 of the publication! In 1986, the Vancouver-based employers of the Public Broadcasting System

(PBS) were instrumental in the formation of Project Literacy B.C. (PLBC) as a counterpart to Project Literacy U.S. PLBC now exists as a sub-group of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is spawning offspring.

A decade ago this month (January 1978) the CBC ran its Fifth Estate program "Can't You Read?" which had such far-reaching effects. Workers had given up hope of the CBC running the program which had been 'in the works' for over a year. The reason given was that the senior staff did not think there would be enough interest in a program on adult illiteracy! Only when there was the threat of a little competition from another network was the program approved for broadcast.

So it would seem, to quote another long-time worker, that "Literacy's time has come." If that is really the case, then this is no time to be idle. If program delivery can be put on a fairly sound footing, then we need to begin to look at other aspects that have been neglected because of lack of resources. 'Quality control' terms are now being used and 'evaluation' is being mooted. These developments should enhance practice and literacy workers should welcome the chance to help define the parameters. As the field continues to evolve, so will the quality and thrust of the discussion.

In the editorial, "In This Issue," prefacing the Fall 1987 issue of LITERACY/ALPHABETISATION (Vol. 12, No.2, pp. 2-3), the author points out some of the inherent dangers in thinking about literacy as awareness of the problem becomes even more pervasive. I would like to offer the following observations which seem to me to reflect the current state of the field in relation to our definitions:

- adult literacy is concerned with the abilities of individuals to function within specific social contexts;

- there is a literacy continuum ranging from the mechanics of learning how to decode and encode, through any number of 'specific literacies' to the mature utilization of literacy skills and processes for informed action and aesthetic appreciation;

- language precedes literacy and how one uses language should be taken into account in literacy instruction;

- the demands of contemporary North-American society are ever changing and at a faster pace, so that literacy 'thresholds' are likely to be in a continuing state of flux, and as long as some people have superior literacy skills, others who have limited skills will remain vulnerable;

- even people with superior literacy skills are at risk in today's labour market where more and more people are becoming unemployed and finding that their literacy levels exceed the requirements for a large part of the economy, thus necessitating a rethinking of many of the assumptions underlying literacy definitions and literacy programs.

AUDREY THOMAS was Director of the Canadian Project for Adult and Basic Literacy Education, 1976-77.

SERGE WAGNER

"Défis pour 1987"

Allocution
à la session d'ouverture
du Séminaire national 1987

Permettez-moi d'abord de partager avec vous le plaisir que j'éprouve à me retrouver au sein d'une assemblée nombreuse de personnes qui militent, au Canada, pour une société plus juste, pour un changement radical de notre attitude comme société à l'égard des populations analphabètes; de personnes qui militent contre la discrimination pratiquée à l'endroit des analphabètes.

Le titre de mon intervention : défi pour 1987, a été retenu pour plusieurs raisons. D'une part, 1987 aura été l'amorce d'un changement majeur dans l'alphabétisation au Canada. Cette question a pris, en 1987, une ampleur qu'elle n'avait jamais connue auparavant : diffusion du sondage Southam sur l'analphabétisme et l'alphabétisation, campagne publique de sensibilisation en Ontario, intervention du gouvernement fédéral, sans parler d'initiatives locales ou régionales diverses. En fait, en 1987, les différents événements survenus auront amorcé, dans le domaine de l'alphabétisation, un changement non seulement quantitatif mais aussi qualitatif. L'alphabétisation ne peut plus être considérée de la même façon : la phase pionnière des années antérieures est en train de se terminer. Les pionniers des premières heures doivent organiser différemment la tâche de l'alphabétisation. Mais ceci n'implique toutefois pas que l'esprit pionnier doive disparaître. Tout au contraire, cet esprit doit persister, se développer.

Ce changement qualitatif qui marque en 1987 le domaine de l'alphabétisation impose des "défis" nouveaux. Ce sont quelques-uns de ces défis que nous allons maintenant explorer.

1. La reconnaissance du problème de l'analphabétisme dans sa complexité - en particulier par les gouvernements.

Ce n'est pas ici le lieu de définir l'analphabétisme et l'alphabétisation. Qu'il suffise de mentionner qu l'analphabétisme des adultes dans un société industrialisée est une réalité complexe. L'analphabétisme concerne l'ignorance ou la maîtrise insuffisante des codes de la lecture, de l'écriture et du calcul, mais cet analphabétisme est généralement associé à d'autres difficultés d'insertion sociale, professionnelle, que l'alphabétisation doit également prendre en compte.

* alphabétisation des enfants et alphabétisation des adultes.

Ceci étant établi, rappelons d'abord comment s'est opérée, dans les pays industrialisés, l'universalisation de l'alphabétisation des enfants au XIXe et au XXe siècles. Dans tous les pays, l'alphabétisation a d'abord été le fait d'initiatives locales: communautées religieuses, oeuvre de bienfaisance, etc. Les formes et les contenus de l'alphabétisation étaient divers. Mais l'universalisation de l'alphabétisation n'a été réalisée que lorsque les Etats s'y sont directement impliqués : par le financement, par des programmes, par des législations.

Cette comparaison peut être éclairante pour l'alphabétisation des adultes. Ici également, l'alphabétisation des adultes a d'abord

été le fait d'initiatives disparates, non coordonnées. L'alphabétisation des adultes a été - et reste le fait - d'individus, de groupes et de collectivités animés par le sens d'autrui et l'esprit pionnier. Mais l'effet de leurs actions demeure circonscrit, limité. L'intervention de l'Etat et des gouvernements est indispensable pour assurer une généralisation de l'alphabétisation.

Cette intervention de l'Etat doit être significative. A cet égard au Canada, nous vivons une situation paradoxale. D'une part, on ne peut plus dire que si les gouvernements n'interviennent pas, c'est parce qu'ils ne sont pas conscients, parce qu'ils ne sont pas "au courant." Avec la diffusion qui a été donnée à la question de l'analphabétisme au course des dernières années et des dernières semaines, aucun gouvernement ne peut prétendre de l'ignorer, tout au plus prouverait-il son inconscience. Il n'est plus vrai d'affirmer que les gouvernements qui actuellement ne reconnaissent pas le problème de l'analphabétisme, manquent de "volonté politique"; bien au contraire, ils manifestent une politique de négligence consciente, de mépris politique objectif des populations analphabètes et sous-scolarisées. Ce mépris doit cesser. D'autre part, quand les gouvernements "reconnaissent" la réalité de l'analphabétisme, il existe une tendance malheureusement trop généralisée : dans bien des cas, les montants consacrés à l'alphabétisation sont plus symboliques que réels. Lorsque les montants sont insignifiants, cela indique que, dans les faits, on ne reconnaît pas l'importance et la priorité du problème. Trop souvent l'alphabétisation se révèle une priorité "cheap" qui donne bonne conscience.

* rôle de l'Etat et des organisations volontaires.

Ce rôle accru et nécessaire de l'intervention de l'Etat ne signifie toutefois pas que l'Etat devrait prendre en charge l'ensemble du domaine de l'analphabétisme des adultes. L'Etat doit intervenir. Le réseau public d'éducation doit intervenir. Mais les organisations communautaires et populaires doivent également poursuivre et accroître leurs interventions.

Les institutions publiques doivent intervenir plus massivement qu'elles ne le font. Elles doivent repenser leur fonction. La question des analphabètes doit susciter réflexion et questionnement. Il est par exemple peu logique de ré-offrir le modèle scolarisant d'alphabétisation à ceux qui ont échoué à l'école etant jeunes.

Une intervention accrue de l'Etat et des institutions publiques implique pourtant que les organisations volontaires devront redéfinir leur fonction et leurs activités. Certaines actions de suppléance face à l'inaction historique de l'Etat seront abandonnées. D'autres types d'interventions devront être au contraire développés : actions auprès des minorités ethniques, auprès des populations marginales généralement mal desservies par les institutions publiques.

* bénévolat et tutorat

Au Canada, un des traits caractéristiques de l'alphabétisation au sein des organisations volontaires est le bénévolat utilié à des fins de tutorat. C'est évidemment une forme d'action qui distingue les organisations volontaires des institutions publiques.

Ce modèle d'intervention a fait ses preuves et il est légitime. Nous voudrions toutefois le questionner sous deux aspects. En premier lieu, au sujet du bénévolat, certaines réalités sont troublantes. Plusieurs données indiquent que les bénévoles sont presqu'entièrement des femmes. Un tel phénomène doit être examiné, questionné.

D'autre part, on doit aussi se demander pour quelle(s) raison(s) l'alphabétisation des adultes se réaliserait principalement (ou de façon importante) par la voie du bénévolat : pour des raisons pédagogiques? pour des motifs d'économie? Si c'est donc principalement pour des motifs économiques, c'est donc dire que l'on perpétue la discrimination et le mépris à l'endroit des populations analphabètes et peu scolarisées. Posons la question : les fonctionnaires qui pensent que l'alphabétisation des adultes doit se réaliser principalement ou exclusivement par le bénévolat accepteraient-ils que leurs propres enfants fussent alphabétisés ... par des bénévoles?

En ce qui a trait au tutorat sur une base individuelle, il faudrait analyser les coûts humains et financiers, l'efficacité et les conditions d'efficience de cette formule. Ici encore, l'expérience historique de l'alphabétisation des enfants peut nous être utile : l'alphabétisation des enfants a pu être possible lorsqu'elle s'est principalement rélisée dans des institutions, et en regroupant les enfants selon leurs niveaux.

Sur toute cette question du bénévolat et du tutorat individuel, on aurait avantage à connaître un peu mieux l'expérience d'alphabétisation en Grande-Bretagne.

2. Examen de certaines questions

Après avoir exposé le problème dans ses dimensions générales, nous souhaitons envisager quelques aspects particuliers.

* discrimination systémique et discrimination positive

Un examen objectif de la situation des personnes analphabètes révèle que les personnes qui ont le moins eu accès à l'éducation étant jeunes sont aussi celles qui ont le moins accès à l'éducation étant adultes.

Cela n'est probablement pas l'effet d'une discrimination intentionnelle des personnes responsable des services d'éducation. Il n'y aurait probablement personne pour affirmer :

> "Je ne vais offrir aucun service ou peu de service en alphabétisation des adultes."

Il y a pourtant discrimination systémique comme celle qui existe à l'égard des femmes ou des minorités : l'offre de service est ainsi organisée qu'elle n'atteint principalement que les plus scolarisés, ceux qui ont un plus haut niveau de revenu.

On ne peut remédier à la discrimination systémique par le paternalisme. En alphabétisation, il n'y a pas de place pour la pitié condescendante. Au minimum, les systèmes d'éducation devraient consacrer à l'alphabétisation le même montant per capita que ceux accordés à d'autres catégories de citoyens.

Plus encore, le moyen le plus adéquat pour tenter d'atteindre une certaine équité serait une politique de discrimination positive : on s'imposerait un ensemble de mesures de rattrapage en alphabétisation.

* l'éducation des minorités

Au Canada, le système scolaire et ses intervenants a été historiquement à la fois le complice et l'un des outils important pour l'ethnocide cultural et linguistique des Amérindiens, des Inuit, des Métis, des francophones. Il ne faudrait pas que le domaine de l'alphabétisation des adultes accepte de jouer le même rôle. Dans bien des cas, il est trop tard, dans d'autres une action même tardive est possible.

Ceux qui affirment que la diversité ethnique et linguistique des peuples du tiers-monde devrait être reconnue doivent adopter la même position en regard de la situation canadienne.

Il ne s'agit pas ici de simplifier la situation et ses différentes composantes. Bien sûr, tenir compte des diversités est une tâche complexe, exigeante. Il se peut bien que tout serait plus simple au Canada s'il n'y avait qu'un peuple, qu'une langue, qu'une culture et, pourquoi pas, un seul palier de gouvernement, .. un seul parti politique. Au Canada, y compris en alphabétisation des adultes, un des grands défis, c'est de faire de ce qui nous différencie une des bases de nos politiques et de nos pratiques.

* défi culturel

Plus fondamentalement peut-être, l'alphabétisation des adultes est confrontée à un défi culturel de taille. Les personnes analphabètes ou peu scolarisées ont bien souvent une vie culturelle particulière (quelle que soit leur appartenance ethnique ou linguistique) basée en partie sur l'oralité.

Comment faire de l'alphabétisation des adultes un processus qui ne détruise pas la culture antérieure des personnes, des communautés? Comment alphabétiser en s'appuyant sur le vécu, sur le savoir, sur la culture de ces personnes et communautés?

* les succès et les échecs

Bien souvent, pour promouvoir l'alphabétisation, on nous relate des cas spectaculaires où, par l'alphabétisation, la vie de certaines personnes a radicalement changée. Comme intervenants, nous avons tous connu des personnes pour qui l'alphabétisation a été l'occasion d'acquérir une autonomie dans la vie quotidienne. Ces "histoires à succès" sont vraies, elles sont motivantes. Mais elles ne représentent pas la totalité de la situation. Il y a aussi des échecs en alphabétisation. Ces échecs sont peut-être même plus nombreux que nos succès. S'il est vrai que l'on apprend à partir de nos erreurs (n'est-ce pas ce que l'on dit à nos participants?), ne devrait-on pas échanger plus couramment sur ces échecs. Pour bien des adultes analphabètes, un échec de leur effort d'alphabétisation est un deuxième échec de vie face à la lecture et à l'écriture, face à une scolarité eventuelle qui aurait peut-être pu changer leurs conditions de vie et de travail. Ces histoires d'échec sont certainement

aussi dramatiquement spectaculaires que les histoires à succès.

* l'apport du tiers-monde

Vivant dans un pays industrialisé, développé, nous avons acquis le réflexe de croire que les ressources du savoir et de la science se trouvaient au Canada, ou aux alentours. Effectivement, dans les rapports internationaux actuels, les pays du Nord détiennent des avantages considérables : l'argent, le savoir technologique .. et le savoir? Les sociétés du Nord sont devenues des pourvoyeuses de spécialistes en tout genre, le Canada fournit des consultants canadiens qui planifient des politiques d'alphabétisation dans tout le tiers-monde.

Pourtant il y a dans le tiers-monde un bagage important de savoir et de savoir-faire en alphabétisation. En particulier dans des domaines tels qu l'évaluation, la prise en compte des cultures, le respect des langues maternelles.

A ce sujet, nous aurions avantage à mettre de côté une attitude ethnocentrique. Plus concrètement, je suggère que le Conseil international d'éducation des adultes (CIEA) prenne l'initiative d'une étude sur l'analphabétisme et l'alphabétisation au Canada. Cette étude pourrait être partiellement financée par l'Agence canadienne de développement international (ACDI) et elle serait menée par des spécialistes de l'alphabétisation en provenance du tiers-monde.

Je suis intimement convaincu que nous pourrions tirer grand profit d'une telle étude.

* coalitions

Enfin, un défi majeur confronte les milieux de l'alphabétisation au Canada. A l'heure actuelle, l'alphabétisation ressemble à une mosaique disparate, atomisée. Certains regroupements existent tels The Movement for Canadian Literacy, le Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation, Ontario Literacy Coalition, et cetera.

Le défi ici, c'est de transformer la mosaique en véritable coalition. Cette coalition comprendrait les organismes d'alphabétisation, les intervenants et les personnes qui s'alphabétisent. Plus spécifiquement, le défi sera de s'unir tout en reconnaissant et en respectant la diversité linguistique, ethnique, culturelle, régionale et autre de notre pays.

Concrètement, la solution sera peut-être la mise sur pied d'une coalition des coalitions.

Quelle que soit la formule qui sera trouvée, la mise sur pied d'une coalition véritable représente une étape et une condition essentielle pour le développement de l'alphabétisation au Canada.

J'espère que nous y parviendrons.

SERGE WAGNER, professeur à l'Université du Québec à Montréal, est directeur, Module de perfectionnement en adaptation scolaire et sociale, Pavillon Lafontaine.

SERGE WAGNER

Challenges for 1987

Speech at opening session of the National Literacy Seminar, October 1987

Let me begin by expressing my pleasure at finding myself in the midst of such a large group of people working for a more just Canadian society and for a radical change in our attitude as a society toward those who are illiterate - and against the discrimination they encounter.

The title of my speech, "Challenges for 1987", was chosen for several reasons. To start with, 1987 marks the beginning of a major change in attitude towards literacy in Canada. In 1987, this issue has received more attention than ever before - publication of the Southam survey on illiteracy, a public awareness campaign in Ontario, and the involvement of the federal government, not to mention a variety of local or regional initiatives. In fact, the series of events which have occurred this year marks a qualitative as well as a quantitative change in the field of literacy. Literacy can no longer be seen in the same light: the pioneering stage of previous years is coming to an end, and the pioneers must find new ways of organizing their literacy work. This is not to say, however, that the pioneering spirit should vanish. On the contrary, this spirit must continue to flourish.

This qualitative change affecting the field of literacy in 1987 brings new challenges, some of which we are going to explore here.

1. Recognition of the complexity of the problem of illiteracy, particularly by governments.

This is not the place to define what we mean by illiteracy and literacy. Suffice to say that adult illiteracy in an industrialized society is a complex reality. Illiteracy is ignorance of or inadequate mastery of the codes of reading, writing and computation, and it is generally associated with other social and occupational problems which literacy work must take into account.

* Literacy education for children and for adults

With this said, let us remember how universal access to literacy education for children was started in the industrialized countries in the 19th and 20th centuries. In each of these countries, literacy education was initiated at the grassroots level by religious communities, charitable organizations and so on. The structure and content of the teaching varied. Universal literacy training was achieved only when the State became directly involved through funding, programming and legislation.

To make the comparison with adult literacy education can be enlightening. This too was the object of a variety of uncoordinated efforts. It was, and still is, carried out by individuals, groups and organizations which are motivated by altruism and the pioneering spirit. But their activities have been limited in their effect. The involvement of the State and of government is indispensable for ensuring universal access to literacy.

The involvement of the State must be substantial. In Canada,

the situation is paradoxical. On the one hand, we can no longer say that if governments are not involved it is because they are unaware and uninformed. With the exposure that has been given to the issue of illiteracy over the last few years and in recent weeks, no government can claim ignorance of the facts; at the very most, it would show its lack of awareness. It is no longer true to state that the governments which do not at present acknowledge the problem of illiteracy are lacking in "political will." On the contrary, they are demonstrating a conscious policy of neglect and of actual political contempt toward those in the population who are illiterate or under-educated. This contempt must come to an end.

On the other hand, when governments do recognize the reality of illiteracy, they share a general and unfortunate tendency; the funds allocated to literacy education are in many cases more symbolic than real. When the funds provided are inconsequential, it indicates that the problem is not being given importance as a priority. Too often literacy education is taken up as a 'cheap' priority, to clear the conscience.

* Role of the State and of voluntary organizations

The increased and necessary role of involvement by the State does not mean, however, that the State should take charge of the whole field of adult literacy work. The State must be involved, as must the public education system, but community and grassroots organizations must also continue to expand their efforts.

The involvement of public institutions must increase beyond their present commitment. Their role must be rethought. The fact that there are illiterates who have been through the school system demands attention and investigation. For example, it does not make sense to offer them the same type of literacy schooling which failed them as children.

With an increased role for the State and for public institutions, voluntary organizations will have to redefine their function and their activities. Some of the programs undertaken to make up for the lack of government action will be dropped. On the other hand, some kinds of activities will need to be expanded: programs for ethnic minorities and other marginal populations generally ill-served by public institutions.

* Volunteers and tutors

In Canada, one of the characteristic features of literacy work in the voluntary sector is the use of volunteer tutors. This practice sets voluntary organisations apart from public institutions. The use of volunteers has proven to be effective. There are two aspects, though, which raise questions. There are some disturbing facts about volunteers. Several studies show that the volunteers are almost entirely women. This is a phenomenon which should be scrutinized and queried.

Then we must ask why adult literacy education is mainly, or to a large extent, delivered by volunteers. Is this for pedagogical reasons, or for economy's sake? If it is primarily for reasons of

economy, it is as good as saying that we are continuing to discriminate against and despise those who are illiterate and undereducated. Put the question this way: would the bureaucrats who think that adult literacy belongs primarily or exclusively in the voluntary sector tolerate their children being taught to read and write by volunteers?

As for one-on-one tutoring, the formula should be analysed in terms of its cost in human and financial resources, its effectiveness and its efficiency. Here again, the historical background of children's literacy is helpful: literacy for children became a possibility when it was effected mainly through institutions with children grouped according to their level.

On the matter of volunteers and one-on-one tutoring it would be useful to know more about Great Britain's experience with literacy education. Over the years, these two delivery systems have lost their early significance in the campaign for literacy.

?

2. Questions to examine

Following this general overview of the problem, let us now look at some specific aspects.

* Systemic discrimination and affirmative action

Objective examination of the situation of illiterate adults shows that those who had the least access to education in their youth are also those with the least access in adulthood.

This is unlikely to be the outcome of intentional discrimination by those responsible for educational services. It is unlikely that someone said: "I am going to provide little or no adult literacy education." Yet there is systemic discrimination, like that faced by women and minorities. The way the service is organized makes it mainly available to the better educated and those with larger incomes.

Paternalism is no remedy for systemic discrimination. In literacy education, condescension and pity will get you nowhere. As a minimum, education systems should allocate to literacy education the same per capita funding as that granted to other categories of citizens.

Better still, the most effective way to try to achieve some kind of equity would be through a policy of affirmative action, by implementing a set of measures to step up literacy education.

* The education of minorities

In Canada, the school system and its personnel have traditionally served as both accomplice and main instrument in the cultural and linguistic ethnocide of native, Inuit, Metis and francophone communities. The field of adult literacy education must not be allowed to play a similar role. In many cases, it is too late to stop this, but in others, there is still time for action, even though belated.

Those who insist that the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the Third World be recognized must take the same position with regard to Canada.

There is no need here to reduce the situation and its different components. There is no doubt that taking differences into account is a difficult and demanding task. It would probably be much easier if Canada had only one people, one language, one culture, perhaps even a single level of government .. and a single political party. In Canada, one of the great challenges - and it is the same in adult literacy education - is to make our differences into a basis for our principles and practice.

*** A cultural challenge**

Perhaps even more fundamental is the sizeable cultural challenge facing adult literacy education. Those who are illiterate or undereducated often have a unique cultural life (whatever their ethnic or linguistic identity) based on an oral tradition.

How can adult literacy education become a process which does not destroy the original culture of individuals and communities? How can literacy training incorporate the experience, knowledge and the culture of learners and their communities?

*** Successes and failures**

Very often, to promote literacy work, we are told about spectacular cases in which literacy brought about radical change in the life of certain learners. As educators, we have all known people whom literacy made autonomous in their daily lives. These success stories are true and inspiring. But they do not reflect the whole reality of the situation. The failures in literacy education may outnumber the successes. If it is true that we learn from our mistakes (isn't this what we tell our learners?) should we not be more ready to talk about our failures? For many illiterates, failure in an adult literacy program is their second failure to learn to read and write, and their second failure to acquire the schooling which might lead to change in their living and working conditions. These failure stories are just as dramatic as the success stories.

*** The contribution of the Third World**

Living in an industrialized, or developed, country, we automatically assume that the resources for knowledge and learning are to be found in Canada, or close near at hand. It is a fact that in present international relationships the countries of the North enjoy considerable advantages: money, technological know-how, .. and knowledge? The societies of the North have become the purveyors of specialists of every kind, and Canada provides consultants to develop literacy policies for the whole Third World.

However, the Third World has a valuable accumulation of knowledge and know-how in literacy education, particularly in the areas of evaluation, cultural awareness and respect for the mother tongue.

This is where we would do well to put aside our ethnocentric attitude. I suggest that the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) take the initiative by carrying out a study of illiteracy and literacy education in Canada. This study could be partially financed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and be carried out by literacy specialists from the Third World.

* Coalitions

Finally, an enormous challenge is facing the field of literacy education in Canada. At the present time, the literacy movement resembles a motley, scattered mosaic. There are a number of groups exist, such as the Movement for Canadian Literacy, the Regroupement des Groupes populaires en Alphabetisation, the Ontario Literacy Coalition, and so on.

The challenge here is to transform the mosaic into a real coalition made up of literacy organizations, practitioners and learners. More specifically, the challenge will be to unite these groups while recognizing and respecting linguistic, ethnical, cultural and regional diversity in our country. In practice, the solution might be to set up a coalition of coalitions.

Whatever formula is used, the establishment of a genuine coalition is an essential step and condition for the development of literacy in Canada. I hope that we are successful in achieving such a coalition.

SERGE WAGNER, professor at the Université de Québec à Montréal, is Director, Module de perfectionnement en adaptation scolaire et sociale, Pavillon Lafontaine.

LITERACY/ALPHABÉTISATION

NEXT ISSUE:

Interest in developing literacy policy seems to be growing. How should policy be developed? Who should participate in developing policy? What should literacy policy include?

At the same time, there is great interest in hearing more from learners. What are effective ways to give learners more control - in programs and in the development of policy? What role can learner conferences play? Should conferences be local or national?

The development of policy and the development of input and control by learners are a dual challenge for the literacy movement in Canada. Without input from learners, how effective can policy be? Without policy - and therefore without funding - how can learners be brougnt together to state their points of view?

The next issue of LITERACY/ALPHABETISATION will explore these two areas.

Submissions are welcome.

Please send your articles to:

Publications Committee,
Movement for Canadian Literacy,
9 St. Joseph Street,
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1J6

by May 30th, 1988.

LINDA YOUNG

ABE in the Workplace

Introduction

The Adult Basic Education for Workers (ABEW) program is part of the Metro-Labour Education and Skills Training Centre, a new project of the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto. The Labour Council represents 180,000 workers in 400 locals throughout Metro Toronto. The Education and Skills Training Centre has four components:

Skills Training - special programs for laid-off and unemployed workers;

English in the Workplace (EWP) which services the needs of both unemployed workers and over 300 immigrant workers every term in approximately 30 different workplaces;

the Centre for Labour Studies, offering a comprehensive program of labour courses for workers (credit courses whereby workers can obtain a certificate in Labour Studies after completing 24 credits);

and the Adult Basic Education (ABE) component which will be offering programs to workers in the workplace and laid-off members from unionized workplaces.

The objectives for ABE are:

* to provide maximum learning opportunities for union members throughout Metropolitan Toronto;

* to enhance the basic literacy and communication skills, numeracy and mathematical skills of workers;

* to broaden the ABE program to include problem-solving skills, study skills, assistance with correspondence courses, upgrading, computer awareness and "life skills".

Through the ABE program, workers will gain new skills and confidence not only to broaden their opportunities in the workplace but also enhance their lives in society, by gaining more control over their individual lives.

At present, funding for the Centre is provided through the Innovations Program, Canada Employment and Immigration, and also by the Ministry of Skills Development and the Ministry of Citizenship, Ontario.

All of the ABEW, ESL/EWP and Skills Training programs are provided free to participants.

Unemployed workers can enrol in our programs and at the same time continue their UIC benefits.

As of January 1, 1988, each of our four programs became affiliated with George Brown College and courses will be accredited by the College.

WHY IS LABOUR INVOLVED IN ABE?

The Labour Council is involved in providing ABE programs for workers because we are concerned about the needs of workers and how best they can be served, not with such things as increased productivity and decreasing absenteeism. The Labour Council and its affiliates have already built up a

great deal of trust among workers for the programs we initiate; for ABE this will be crucial to the success of our program.

The labour movement has a major role to play in expanding and improving the opportunities for life-long learning of workers in Canada. The Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto in particular has a proud history in providing meaningful workers' education programs and the ABE program will be an integral part of these programs through the new Education and Skills Training Centre.

We believe education should be a fundamental right for all Canadians and that adult education should be made available to all who want it, no matter what level a worker is at. Our workplace programs will allow workers the opportunity to upgrade their math, English, numeracy and literacy skills in the workplace.

HOW IS OUR PROGRAM DIFFERENT FROM OTHER WORKPLACE PROGRAMS?

For our workplace programs, we will be encouraging co-workers to become facilitators. Our facilitators will probably already have some kind of leadership role in the workplace, such as shop steward, executive board member from the local union, or union counsellor. As trade-unionists, they already have the trust of the workers and have been elected by the workers to represent and protect their interests in the workplace; the trust and sensitivity which is extremely important to commitment to the program is already there.

Because the majority of our programs will be given in the workplace, the union hall or at the Centre itself (for laid-off or unemployed workers), they will in most cases be work-oriented - related to a particular kind of work performed, union-related, dealing with health and safety, workers' compensation, and so on.

Therefore, we believe that it is vital to the success of our workplace programs to recruit facilitators out of the workplace with a good, solid trade-union background. The majority of our facilitators will already have experience in teaching and facilitating in various union programs, such as collective bargaining, health and safety, human rights, affirmative action, and others, and a good number are active in community work.

We are also recruiting trade-unionists who are bilingual, so that we have the resources to deal with mother-tongue literacy needs (for speakers of French, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Italian, Greek, Punjabi, Spanish and other languages when needed). Some of our facilitators have an Ontario teachers' certificate, en-abling us to assist in giving correspondence couses when required, - for example, Grade 10 English or math.

Our first training program will take place in February and will include trade-unionists from the following unions: CUPE, ILGWU, OPEIU, CWC, OPSEU, USWA, CAW and ACTWU.

SERVING THE NEEDS IN THE WORKPLACE: HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WORKERS WANT?

We are conducting an extensive advertising campaign for our ABE program. We have extensive material including brochures, flyers outlining our programs, kits containing various literature around literacy, posters, and so on. All of this is being sent out to local unions which are affiliated to the Labour Council of Metropollitan Toronto - 400 locals representing 180,000 members. We will be attending membership meetings, all the education courses offered by the Centre for Labour Studies, and union conferences, and advertising in the labour newspapers and other media. Meetings will be set up with local unions to discuss how to recruit their workers from the shop floor. This will be achieved through membership meetings, advertising on the union boards, word of mouth on the shop floor through the steward body, union counsellors and others.

The union may negotiate with the company for space to hold the classes, access to work-related materials and, most importantly, negotiate for workers to attend classes on company paid time. The English at the Workplace program has been very successful in negotiating half-time off for 50 percent of classes (one hour paid by the company and one hour on participants' own time).

Metro Toronto Housing Authority (Local Union CUPE 767) pays for the entire period their workers are attending English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, which is four hours a week per worker. Approximately 30 workers are involved in the program each term. We have found from experience that, where a company has been fully supportive of our workplace programs by providing comfortable space, materials and paid time off the job to attend classes, the benefits have been greater to the employees involved and more trust has developed between workers and management, thus improving the working relationship. This is not just a benefit to workers, but also to management.

We have chosen to call our program Adult Basic Education for Workers (ABEW) and not "Literacy in the Workplace" for many reasons. Firstly, because of the stigma attached to the whole question of literacy. There is a great deal of self-blame, instead of blame for the system that has let them down. Workers have demonstrated a great deal of ingenuity and creativity in keeping the fact that they cannot read and write, or have limitations in this area, from the bosses and their co-workers for years, and from their perspective they are "getting along just fine". To go into the workplace and offer programs headed up "Literacy in the Workplace" and expect the workers to make themselves totally vulnerable to the system that so far has let them down, is, from our perspective, totally insensitive and doomed to failure. Workers would be afraid that if the bosses found out they would be fired or demoted and, even worse, leave themselves open to ridicule from some insensitive bosses and co-workers.

We plan to offer specific programs for the workplace, such as math upgrading, writing and study skills, basic literacy skills, communication skills, effective reading and writing, writing for reports, and computer awareness. Our classes will be small groups of up to 6 with one facilitator, and larger groups of 10-12 with two facilitators. This way we will be

able to meet all the participants' needs from very basic level to Grade 9 or 10. Where the need arises we will provide one-to-one tutoring.

The content of our programs will be based on the needs of the workers involved and to achieve this, facilitators will discuss with the participants what the actual content will be. This will be an ongoing practice, as the needs might change or vary as the classes progress. As well, we will conduct a needs assessment of the workplace. It will be our responsibility to make sure that, while addressing the needs of the participants, we also incorporate into the program issues like the rights of workers, health and safety, the right to refuse unsafe work under the law, and so on.

In the case of health and safety, it is not just a question of being able to read labels on containers in the workplace which might contain harmful chemicals, but to inform them of the harmful effects these chemicals could have on their health after continuous use over their working lives. In the labour movement we are suspicious of other programs which lay all the responsibility for health and safety on workers. We know that the major problem is the conditions in our workplaces and some managements' irresponsible attitudes and behaviour around the health and safety issue (namely putting profits before providing a health and safe work environment for workers), not our lack of literacy or English skills.

In the area of workers' compensation, we will deal with the right to file a claim for work-related accidents, even if there is no loss of work-time at the time of the accident. It is not unusual for management to deter workers from exercising this right.

We will also deal with workers' rights under the collective agreement: how to file a grievance, requests to see their steward, how membership meetings are run, reading notices on the union boards (not just management notices), and so on. Our responsibility extends to issues which affect workers outside the workplace, too; issues such as learning to handle their personal budgets, the banking system, dealing with school system reports and parent interviews. In fact, anything that the participants feel is important to them, anything which will enhance and bring more control over their lives - that is what is important to us at the Centre.

CONCLUSION

Working people in Canada have for too long been treated as mere units of labour - producing the profits for the system. Faced with numerous attacks on their standard of living, working people now need more and more skills to be able to handle those changes forced upon their lives by new technologies being introduced without workers' interests being considered; massive job loss as a result of Free Trade; plant closures and lay-offs now treated as a way of life.

We are committed to providing programs that can assist workers dealing with these problems to critically analyse their situation, acquire more general, portable skills, and gain better control over the changes forced upon them and their families.

LINDA YOUNG is Coordinator of the Metro Labour Education and Skills Training Centre's Adult Basic Education program in Toronto.

ANIMATING LEARNER PARTICIPATION

The National Seminar highlighted the fact that learners' voices are too rarely heard in discussions of adult literacy in Canada, either on the local level in programs, or more broadly. But the Seminar also made it clear that interest in animating learner participation is high. It pointed out that the literacy movement has some work to do to become more representative.

The Board of the MOVEMENT FOR CANADIAN LITERACY has a Learners' Conference Committee. For information, contact MCL at 9 St. Joseph Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1J6.

Saskatoon Learners' Conference

On World Literacy Day, September 8, 1987, a Learners' Conference took place at the Francis Morrison Library in Saskatoon, organized by adult learners for adult learners, with the help of Robin Stonehouse of the Movement for Canadian Literacy and Georgina Kyle, News-in-Education coordinator, Saskatoon Star-Phoenix.

The conference organizers held a series of meetings to put together a day that would be useful to others who are learning to read, to give students a chance to tell their story and learn what programs were available to them in the city. They wanted participants, after spending the day together, to leave feeling that they could learn from teachers and students and feel better about themselves. The theme of the conference was "Reaching Out."

Several of the learners who attended the Conference prepared news reports.

By Ralph

WORLD LITERACY TODAY

We are living in a world where people need to know how to read and write. In this country alone we have about one million people who cannot read or write. Some of the causes are illness, family problems and learning problems.

On September 8, 1987, there was a Conference held in the City of Saskatoon at the Main Public Library. The explanation of the day was given by Omer, a student on the planning committee. He explained what life was like for him before he learned to read and write and how attending Read Saskatoon helped him.

The conference was then broken up into small groups where each person was to discuss the topic off "Why you didn't finish school." Later, each group was asked to share their views with the other groups.

The small groups were then asked what their reactions to the day were. These are some of their thoughts. "I feel like I can do more to reach more people." "I never realized there were so many people with the same problem." The other students were surprised at the lack of public interest, and the amount of people who have the same problems as they do.

The recommendations that were suggested by the students at the conference were (1) that there be more publicity through the federal government and provincial government.

(2) More information should be given to the public through radio and television and the local news paper.

(3) Teachers should be aware of such problems with the younger ones that are just starting school.

This is one reaction from one of our teachers, namely Cathy. "A wonderful opportunity for learners to meet and discuss the various aspects of literacy." The conference was well organized and such a success that more should be planned in the future.

By Fabian Morin

WORLD LITERACY DAY
"Chance to speak out"

One hundred students gathered together on Sept 8 at the public library to have a conference on literacy in Canada.

People of different cultures and backgrounds, with different opinions were put into groups to discuss: why they didn't get their education, what made them go back and how they went about getting back in.

Students had a chance to speak out their opinions and thoughts on the educational system. Students had similar problems as to why they couldn't attend school. Family crisis and financial problems were the most common.

Students were asked how they could reach out to the majority of illiterate people in Canada. They were very imaginative. Some of the ideas were going through media, brochures and other conferences.

Students and instructors were very pleased about the number of people that took part in the conference.

JOHN NOBESS MANITOBA

Learning at the Learners' Conference

Before I came to Rossbrook House, I had trouble at other schools. I had teachers that did not care about their students. They ignored them. I had trouble with math, spelling, and writing sentences. I had trouble getting jobs, but I still tried to work. I worked for a while at Burns Meats, in several restaurants as a dish-washer, and at Skills Unlimited. It was hard to keep a job, because there were times when I had to read lists in order to pack meat orders. Then, I had to ask people what was written on the order. Sometimes, I couldn't understand the meanings of words that people used, so I became too nervous to speak with them. I used to be very unhappy about myself, but now I am feeling much better.

I feel much better now that I am going to Rossbrook School and that I am learning more. I admitted that I needed to learn things when I came to Rossbrook. The teachers here helped me along. My thoughts are that I want to learn more. I am starting to learn as I go along. My skills have changed since I came here. I can speak more clearly now. I don't stutter as much, and my words come out right. In addition, I've learned new vocabulary. I used to have a hard time talking things over with people. I know now that I can talk with people and not be scared or nervous.

When I went to the Learners' Conference, I learned a lot from all the small groups and from talking about things with other people. We talked about different kinds of trouble people went through, and about "Getting It Together", the theme of the Conference. I liked the groups that I took part in. Everyone shared the problems they had where they lived. I enjoyed myself at the Conference. I learned from the groups, and I felt glad that I attended that Conference. The Conference helped me to express myself in front of a large group. In addition, I met new friends.

Reprinted from ROSSBROOK'S SPIRITED WRITERS, published by Winnipeg School Division No. 1, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

FROM THE LEARNER'S POINT OF VIEW

Two videos are available from Manitoba' Department of Continuing Education:

"Learners Learning the System" describes a learners's conference held in the fall of 1987

"You're Never Too Old to Learn" describes literacy programs from the learners' point of view.

For more information or to order copies, contact:

Johanna Faulk
Department of Continuing Education
4th Floor - 185 Carlton Street,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3J1
Telephone: (204) 945-8142

From "LET'S GET TOGETHER", East End Literacy Press

On the Board of Directors

"There are a lot of students who have the potential to contribute to the board of directors and to committees – but it will take time and patience."

The Buddy System

People who have never been to a meeting can find their first one very confusing. When someone new joins the group, that person should be teamed up with a volunteer who has more experience. Before the meeting, they should go over what happened at the last meeting. During the meeting, they should sit beside each other so that the experienced person can explain what is going on.

Speaking Plainly

"One of the first meetings I went to, I didn't understand what the hell they were saying. The second one I went to, I spoke to the chairperson. I said, 'Explain more clearly to a student who wants to learn about meetings.' After that, it got a lot easier."

People who have been going to meetings for a long time often forget that they use words that the newer people don't understand. It is important to remember to speak clearly and simply.

"I've learned a lot. I've learned by watching, and listening, and doing. That's how you learn."

Reprinted from "LET'S GET TOGETHER", available East End Literacy Press, 265 Gerrard Street East, Toronto, Ontario M5A 2G3, price $5 plus postage and handling.

EILEEN JOYCE COUCHENE

Hear My People, They Are Crying

Illiteracy is an international tragedy. In Canada alone, four million Canadians are functionally illiterate. And who are the illiterate? They are farmers, native people, inmates and people who have given up hope and are now in psychiatric care. They are all those who cannot read and write beyond the grade eight level. They are the poor!

In fact, 51% of those who are illiterate in Canada are native people! Despite this fact, only four of the 230 Canadian delegates at the Toronto Literacy Seminar were native, and I was one of the four. I found it very difficult at first to voice my concerns about the social injustices that confront illiterate native people. To my amazement, I found the support that I needed from people from other nations. With their help, I was able to get my point across, and the Canadians had to listen, because delegates from other parts of the world were saying the same things.

First, I said that literacy is not just basic upgrading in reading, math and English, but part of adult education for the empowerment of people. Empowerment happens through active learner participation both in what and how they learn. This develops their awareness of self in relation to others in the program and to the rest of society. Because of illiteracy, poor people are disempowered. They are unable to interact with those who are the decision-makers in our country.

English is the dominant language in areas of Canada where these 51% native illiterate people live. It is the language of the decision-makers and of past colonialists. Learning to read and write is one important tool for native personal and social expression, for control over destiny and as a means for developing self-confidence.

Illiteracy among natives has its effects in society through the wastage of individual human potential. Illiteracy among native people is caused in large part by cultural differences. The native learner does not fit into the present school system, which motivates through individual competition. Native culture is group-oriented, with the individual as part of the group. The group works together towards successful achievement, rather than for individual gain.

If native people can collectively take part in educational activities, then they can experience a sense of belonging and can successfully carry out group projects that include all. As a collective group, they can make known their needs and begin to formulate plans of action to get these needs met. They will then have a stronger voice and will no longer be forced into competition with each other. Individualized skill development can take place at the same time, within this cooperative community model, where all have contributions

to make. They have to have input into the content, structures and administration of their programs. Through this active participation, they can learn the skills to be able to plan and coordinate their own learning programs.

This approach has already been successfully tried in Ontario which has 28 native-run community-based literacy programs. Literacy workers use popular education techniques which include story and legend telling. The initial approach uses a small-group process which is learner-centred. It focuses on group concerns and issues. These 28 groups have organized themselves into a Native Literacy Coalition with a native coordinator.

We need more community-based programs that follow this model for literacy learners to become the artisans of their own destiny!

Yukon

PRESENTATION TO THE JOINT COMMISSION ON INDIAN EDUCATION

In May 1987, two members of the Yukon Literacy Council, Eleanor Millard and Brian Eaton, appeared before a hearing of the Joint Commission on Indian Education and Training, to present some of the Council's concerns about literacy in the Yukon.

They stressed that the issue of adult literacy is an extremely important one for the Commission to examine as it carries out its consultative process throughout the Territory. The Council representatives told the Commission members that the statistics on education for the Territory can be quite deceptive. Census figures show that the Yukon has one of the highest levels of educational attainment in the country, due to the large number of well-educated people who come to work in government-related jobs.

One of the communities with a high percentage of functional illiteracy is Teslin. Significantly, it is also a community with a large native population. The Council representatives pointed out that adults with literacy skills at a lower level are unable to reinforce the educational goals and accomplishments of their children. For educational opportunities to become truly beneficial, the community must have a positive attitude toward education as a whole. There must be some appreciation of the importance of literacy; there must be a positive parental role-model for children to follow. Only if these conditions are met can a child perceive that education is a worthwhile goal.

WORDPOWER, Yukon Literacy Council

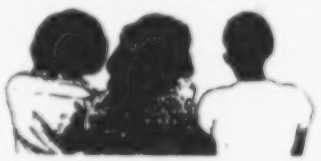
Adult Literacy Education with West Indians in Toronto: Some Considerations

EILEEN SHANNON

The St. Christopher House Literacy Program is part of a settlement house in the inner city of Toronto, and the amazing cultural diversity of the community is reflected in participation in the literacy and language program. The challenge for community literacy workers in this setting is to help people to meet the literacy demands that are placed on them in the Canadian urban context, while respecting and enhancing their pride in their own cultural and linguistic heritage.

Within this multicultural program, there is a very large number of students who have immigrated from the Caribbean. They make up over a third of the students in the program, a proportion that is considerably higher than their concentration in the population of Toronto in general. Their first language is English, or a dialect of English, and they have varying levels of facility with standard Canadian English. As immigrants they face the same struggles that all immigrants face in adjusting to a new land, as Blacks they face the added burden of racism that exists in predominately White, Anglo-Saxon society, and as speakers of a dialect of English that is not always understood or appreciated by non-dialect speakers, they contend with communication problems that can be as severe as those of non-English-speaking immigrants. Most significantly, as people who do not possess the literacy skills that are generally deemed to be a requisite for functioning in this society, they confront some particular disadvantages that well-educated Black Caribbean immigrants may escape.

It is imperative that those of us who are working in the field of adult literacy in areas of the country where there is a significant concentration of Caribbean-Canadians begin to consciously examine the particular circumstances of students from the Caribbean. In the summer of 1987, I undertook a research project in which I examined the relatively scant writing on the subject, most of which originated in Great Britain, and spoke with some Caribbean learners in our program. It is my hope that this article will provoke some discussion around the issues raised, and a move towards a practice that is more sensitive and responsive to the needs of Caribbean learners.



WEST INDIANS IN TORONTO

It is difficult to obtain figures for the educational attainment of West Indians in Canada but one researcher states that people of Caribbean background have a somewhat lower level of education than majority Canadians - 11.7 years compared to 13.9 years (Christiansen et al., 1982). I have found no figures to indicate levels of functional literacy among West Indians. In Canada, functional literacy is usually defined as having had at least eight years of education, and 28.3% of Canadians have less than that (Thomas, 1983). In a sample of West Indians who were clients of the Family Service Association in Don Mills and

Willowdale, there were about 30% with less than Grade 9 education, a figure that is not significantly higher than the general Canadian one.

Somewhat more apparent is the disadvantage that West Indians experience in a society where socio-economic stratification based on ethnicity is a fact of life. In 1984, a Royal Commission on Employment Equity found that there is an 11% disparity between the incomes of Caribbean immigrants and the national average. Black immigrants arriving after 1970 had incomes that were only 81% of that of all immigrants. Another study (Reitz, 1981) pointed out that although West Indians were segregated along with Italians and Portuguese in occupations that were similarly of low-status and income, West Indians' incomes were even lower than might be expected, considering that they were generally more qualified and better educated than the Italian or Portuguese workers.

In addition to the structural inequalities built into Canadian society, many Blacks feel the effects of discrimination in their daily lives. In a Toronto Star poll in 1982, 62% of Metro residents admitted to being racist to some degree (Toronto Star, 1985). A study of attitudes among Caribbean migrants in Metro revealed that 90% of them felt that there was some or a great deal of discrimination in Toronto, and 54% had personally experienced discrimination in some form (Head, 1980), This discrimination was mainly in the areas of housing and employment but was also evident for many in the schools, on the streets and in community services.

CARIBBEAN LANGUAGE

The language that is spoken by many migrants from the Caribbean is not strictly speaking a dialect, but a Creole. It developed from the pidgin that grew up in West Africa as a means of communication between Africans of different language groups and the European colonists. The Caribbean Creole has evolved through the period of slavery in the New World and up into modern times as a systematic, fully-formed language, with its own syntax, pronunciation and vocabulary. Because it developed in the context of a highly stratified society, as the language of the powerless and oppressed strata, it has often been viewed as inferior to so-called Standard English. Mastery of Standard English has been a prerequisit to upward mobility; without it, one cannot access employment or educational opportunities. This proves to be true in countries to which Caribbean people migrate as well as in their homelands, and many find that they are severely disadvantaged if they are not able to express themselves in speech or writing in Standard English as it is spoken in such countries as great Britain and Canada.

In Great Britain, in schools and adult literacy programs, an approach termed 'bidialectalism' is being taken in certain cases in working with students from the Caribbean. The focus is on encouraging a positive evaluation of the Caribbean dialects that are spoken by students. No attempt is made to alter the oral speech, but written material in both dialect and

Standard English is made available to students, who learn about the differences between the two codes. It is assumed that knowledge of the syntactic, semantic and pronunciation differences between the two leads to an enhanced ability to code-switch, to speak both Standard or Creole or any variation on a continuum between the two, as the particular social circumstances require. It also is said to ease the learning of writing skills in Standard English (Craven et al., 1985).

While the British experience is most instructive, there is as yet not sufficient evidence to assume that the bidialectalism approach is the only effective means of helping adult learners to acquire literacy skills in Standard English. There can be little doubt that there is great value in enouraging in Caribbean learners a pride in their own language and culture, and that the sense of self-esteem that arises from that can have a very positive effect on learning. However, there is a very real possibility that the bidialectical approach could be confusing for many learners, and some of the prerequisities for introducing it may not be present in Canadian programs at this time. We need to understand more about the experience of literacy learners here. The following provides some glimpses into that experience.

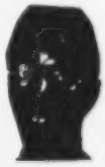
SOME WEST INDIAN LITERACY STUDENTS

Wendell

Wendell is a young man in his mid-20s, single, living at home with his parents. He is working in a restaurant in downtown Toronto, where he is apprenticing as a pastry chef. Wendell came here as a child; his parents immigrated first from Jamaica and he joined them a year later. He went into Grade Three in a school in East End Toronto that had a lot of West Indian children and never felt particularly isolated or discriminated against there. Only later, at a high school which was predominantly white, did he begin to feel isolated, that he had little in common with his classmates. He left school after Grade 12, without having acquired adequate literacy. He attributes his problems with reading and writing to the dialect:

> "Well I know the problem that I had when I came over here just to try to, to flip over ... It's really difficult to switch over and adjust and read it and pronounce the word the right way and spell it. It's a whole new - it's like learning all over back again like from Grade One up."

Wendell feels that he faces no discrimination at work and that there would be no barrier to advancement because of his colour. He says his problems with Standard English have been the most serious disadvantage for him.



Because of the problems he himself experienced in school because of his dialect, Wendell can see no value in teaching West Indian children here dialect, although he recognizes its value in preserving the culture. He feels strongly, however, that it would be very beneficial if students in our program could work together with a tutor who is also from the Caribbean.

"I know that some people with really strong dialect, when they find themselves really frustrated with trying to learn English, they just leave it alone and they don't bother with it .... It would help if they (the tutors) know how to understand the dialect .... cause it like two different languages, and the student doesn't understand what the tutor is saying, and the tutor doesn't understand that much what the student is saying, so it would help if the tutor knowed some of the dialect, and just the basic."

Alice

Alice is a Jamaican, a widow in her mid-40s who has been in Canada for seven years. She came here to work as a baby-sitter and has continued working in the service sector, in nursing homes, home care and hotels. Alice was only able to attend school up until the sixth grade in Jamaica, for although she was doing well, family circumstances did not allow her to continue. She came to the program in order to upgrade her reading and writing skills, to qualify for entrance to a community college health-care aide course.

Unlike Wendell, Alice says that she has had no problems with dialect and sees no particular need to have more Caribbean tutors in the program. She states quite emphatically that:

"I for one would prefer to speak Canadian English .... because I'm among the Canadian people."

Hazel

Hazel, also a Jamaican, is in her early 60s. She and her husband came here ten years ago, sponsored by her daughter; she has a large extended family here, including five grandchildren, three of whom were born in Canada. She did not attend school for long as a child, and as a person who takes great pleasure in learning, she feels a keen regret over a missed opportunity. Unlike Wendell and Alice, who have very clear job-related goals in coming to St. Christopher House, Hazel mainly wants to learn to do "more for meself".

Hazel is well aware of discrimination that exists in Toronto and her observations confirm the general feeling that it is a subtle, not overt, discrimination:

"There's discrimination here, yes, sometimes in the supermarket here, you go in there you feel it, in the buses, you meet up on it. They're not coming out directly and saying "so and so" but you can see."

Hazel is quite sure that the dialect should be preserved as part of the Jamaican heritage and thinks young people should be exposed to it in school; she observes that her grandchildren often ask her husband to speak it for them and love to hear it. Yet she sees some real disadvantage for young people who are only able to speak dialect. The two of her grandchildren who were born in Jamaica had real problems when they came to school in Canada. They were put back because they were considered not to be speaking proper English, and even by high school they had not caught up. She is very concerned about

the fact that young West Indians are dropping out of school without having learned to read and write properly; she thinks that this may be potentially a greater problem than any discrimination they may face.

Hazel thinks that it would be good to have more Caribbean tutors in the program, but her answer to that question is interesting in that it is revealing of the indifference she perceives within the Caribbean community to the problem of illiteracy.

> "More teachers from the Caribbean, because the thing about it, they know your culture, I mean, they're the same culture, most of them sort of fit in and understand more about the West Indian .... But they're not coming. What I notice with us from the Caribbean - we're from the Caribbean, we cannot read properly, nobody don't want nobody to know, you know what I mean ... I prefer to be with Canadians ... they don't show us as if it a crime."

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The conversations that I had with three students, some of the most interesting aspects of which I have recorded here, were extremely valuable to me. They were enjoyable, they were informative, they were in some ways surprising and they were certainly thought-provoking.

One common feature that imporessed me greatly was the equanimity which all three of them showed in regard to the question of discrimination. They were all aware of its existence, and Wendell and Hazel were both willing to talk about their own experiences of racism, but none of them showed any real bitterness and anger. It is entirely possible, of course, that they would feel inhibited about expressing strong feelings on the issue to me, both because I am a White Canadian, and the coordinator of the program that they attend, and they might not wish to risk offending me. But I perceived it rather as an unwillingness to focus on the negative aspects of life in Canada, a choice to concentrate instead on the opportunities they see existing for themselves and their families. It is an optimism that I greatly admire.

Their comments on the questions of dialect and West Indian culture have confirmed my long-held opinion that we should be making a special effort to recruit tutors from West Indian backgrounds. They were all of the opinion that it would be very useful to some people, especially those whose dialect was quite strong, to be able to work together with someone who understood them without difficulty and who was aware of their background.

We do have a few Caribbean people tutoring in the program but for the most part tutors are White, middle-class Canadians. Although we do address the issue of dialect in the tutor-training and try to impart some sensitivity to the needs of Caribbean students, there is a limit to how much effect this can have on the long-term tutoring relationship. It may be that certain students will prefer to have a Canadian tutor, as they may see this as an opportunity to improve their facility with Canadian English. Nevertheless there should be the possibility of matching a student from the Caribbean with a tutor who shares their background and language, if they so wish.

Related to this is the issue of staffing in literacy programs. There are few permanent staff of West Indian origin in programs in Toronto that I am aware of. While it is extremely important that staff make themselves aware of the issues involved in literacy for Caribbean students, even the most culturally aware and sensitive White Canadians are limited in their ability to respond to the needs of these students. The development of aspects of the programs that might especially benefit West Indian students could best be carried out by people who share the West Indian experience. The question of qualifications and interest is naturally an important one that cannot be ignored, but some special effort could be made to recruit staff from Caribbean backgrounds. Many literacy program staff have begun as volunteer tutors and because of their interest and commitment have gone on to be employed as literacy workers. Having more tutors from the Caribbean community would also increase the chances that qualified, interested Caribbean applicants would be available for jobs in literacy programs.

The students interviewed were also asked if they thought that the Caribbean community should be initiating its own programs. They all felt that these would be useful, but none of them would feel any great need to transfer to such a program, should one open. The question of special programs is a difficult one. At St. Christopher House we are committed to an ethnically integrated approach to literacy education, for the benefits that accrue to the individual participants involved and for the community at large. Perhaps the solution might be for current literacy providers to work together more closely with the agencies currently serving the Caribbean community, to develop special projects or materials, or outreach efforts.

The question of resources is another important one. The materials that are currently available are either from the Caribbean or Great Britain and, while they are enthusiastically received, they do not befin to fill the need for beginning reading materials that are relevant to the lives and experience of the students. As new materials are developed within literacy programs here, we should keep in mind the necessity of producing resources that reflect the Caribbean experience in Canada. The question of materials in dialect also needs to be explored. Although the British exponents of the bidialectical approach see great value in using stories in dialect, I have seen a student have great difficult reading dialect. Because his reading instruction had been in Standard English, the dialect appeared on the printed page as a foreign form; words that he was very familiar with in speech presented great difficulty in print. We need to understand a lot more about how new readers respond as individuals to the different codes before we begin to use them both in instruction.

Lastly I would call our attention to the prospects for the future in literacy education for West Indians. A recent report of the Toronto Board of Education (Globe and Mail, Toronto, 10.7.87) sounded the alarm about the severe problems facing Black children in the primary and secondary schools

in the city. We have seen here how that has affected Wendell and Hazel's grandchildren. West Indian parents and children perceive that racism inherent in the school system is shunting more and more students into basic level courses, while only 36% of them are enrolled in courses leading to post-secondary education, as compared to 54% of all students. Our own experience with students who come to us after having completed basic level high school courses is that they often have not achieved a level of functional literacy that would enable them to be employed in any but the most menial jobs, and their prospects for the future are dim. A new generation of students will be coming to literacy programs and we must begin now to develop ways to respond to the challenge ahead.

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BUILDING NETWORKS FOR LITERACY WORKERS

The National Literacy Seminar was the first time in ten years that literacy workers from across the country gathered together. The provincial discussions in the afternoon made it clear that networks for literacy workers are not equally developed across the country. The workshops in this theme area began to consider some of the issues important in building networks for literacy workers: What purposes do such networks serve? Who do they serve? Who should be included? How are learners affected by these networks?

The following articles each describe one of the workshops in this theme area.

Relationships Between Community-Based and Formal Programs

KEITH ANDERSON and MARY NORTON

Some twenty-five people participated in this seminar. There was least one representative from most of the provinces and territories, and there was a balance between those participants who identified themselves as community-based workers, and those who said they worked in formal programs. Our intention in reporting on the seminar is to promote continuing discussion on the topic and related issues.

THE PROCESS

As seminar participants arrived, they wrote their names on a large map of Canada, next to where they worked. They also indicated the type of program they worked in and the type of work they did. We did not define the terms, "community-based" or "formal"; rather, we asked the group to accept each person's self-definition.

We started with a brain-storming session to determine what people felt were important issues on the topic. All the ideas were recorded without discussion; then we organized them in categories. These provided a focus for the small group discussion which took place next.

We broke into four groups, with a balance of regional, program-type and work-type representation in each. Each group was to discuss the main issues, identify one as a priority, and make a recommendation to address it. Following reports from the discussion groups, the large group determined by consensus the two most important issues and recommendations. These follow.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of the learner should be of prime importance in communication between community-based and formal programs.

(a) Effective communication between community-based and formal programs should enhance the credibility of both by:

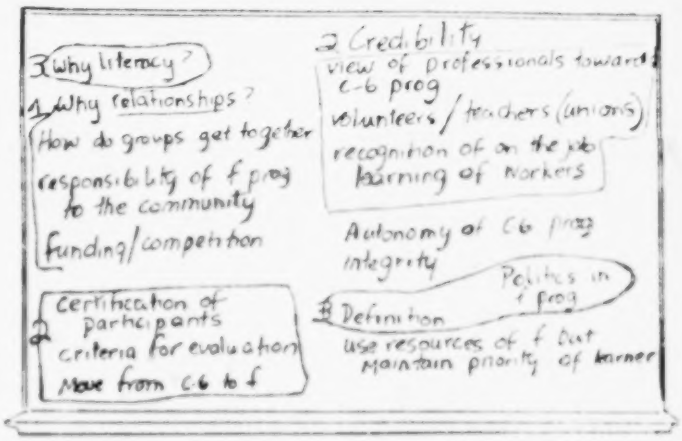
* recognizing the strengths and legitimacy of each
* increasing effectiveness of resources available
* producing a stronger voice for raising issues of literacy among policy makers and the public.

(b) We need to convince funders and decision makers of the validity of assessment of literacy education programs that recognizes the knowledge, goals and development of learners (rather than being based on learners' achievements related to pre-set curriculum).

As a first step, we need to develop ways to exchange information about approaches to learner-based assessment which is being done/developed. This recommendation must be carried out in the context of defining purposes/goals of literacy education in terms of the broad range of literacy/ life-long learning. (1)

FROM RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRACTICE

Across Canada, people from various agencies and interest groups are developing ways to relate and work together. For instance, in Saskatchewan, a provincial Literacy Council has been formed as part of a three-year literacy campaign initiated by the provincial government. The Council


3 Why literacy?
1 Why relationships?
How do groups get together
responsibility of f prog to the community
funding/competition
2 Credibility
view of professionals toward c-b prog
volunteers/teachers (unions)
recognition of on the job learning of workers
Autonomy of CB prog integrity
Politics in f prog
4 Definition
use resources of f but maintain priority of learner
Certification of participants
criteria for evaluation
Move from c-b to f

has representation from such interest groups as tutor programs, colleges, students, teachers and the media; its role is to advise on the provincial campaign. This government-sponsored, centralized approach is consistent with the Saskatchewan government's coordination of adult basic and literacy education at the community level.

The same approach does not as readily apply to other provinces where numerous programs have developed independent of government. In Ontario, local literacy advisory councils are developing as umbrella groups, with membership from institution-based and community-based programs. The emerging roles for local councils include development of resource centres and literacy information lines. Development of such regional networks is seen as an essential part of developing a province-wide Ontario Literacy Coalition.

These two examples reflect differences in provincial histories and situations; the differences remind us that there is no single 'model' for a grouping of interest groups. Nonetheless, these 'groups of groups' are avenues to the implementation of our recommendations.

However people come together - in councils, coalitions or alliances - their grouping will provide forums for discussion, negotiation and changing perceptions on such concerns as were raised in our seminar. As an example, our recommendations advocate that the "goal of the learner be of prime importance in communication." As groups do come together, involvement of learners as spokespersons and decision-makers will force a coming to terms of what this recommendation really means.

Our recommendations are about "working together." But acting on them requires a working-out, together, of the issues, ideals and views that make the topic of relationships an issue in the first place.

Footnote

(1): As this recommendation was originally written in haste, and was difficult to read, I have edited it without altering the content-- M.N.

Submitted by KEITH ANDERSON and MARY NORTON, in consultation with RICHARD BONOKOSKI and BRAM FISHER. Keith is a Consultant in the Community Programs Branch of Alberta Advanced Education. Mary is a student and free-lance literacy worker in Edmonton. Richard is the Coordinator of the Saskatchewan Literacy Campaign, and Bram is a coordinator of a literacy program in Kingston, Ontario.

ALBERTA
Language and Literacy
Advisory Group

Alberta tutors and teachers of Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language have talked about a resource centre for years. People designing programs and working with students, particularly those in isolated areas, have wanted someone to talk with about their challenges and problems and somewhere they could view books and other resource materials. Now is is one step close to being a reality, thanks to a grant from Multiculturalism Canada.

The resource service is being designed to assist those working with adults who are learning to speak, read and write English. It will be able to help to solve such problems as: How can I assist this New Canadian who has asked me for help? Where can I find easy-to-read materials about growing vegetables? How can I start a program to teach adults to read?

The grant has been given to the Language and Literacy Advisory Group, a consortium of organizations representing English as a Second Language and Adult Literacy concerns.

As well as lending materials and providing advice, the service will refer learners to programs, coordinate in-service education and serve as a clearinghouse for information.

For more information:
Mary Norton - (403)433-2360
Laura Ho - (403)468-3418

TANNIS ATKINSON

Community-Based Literacy Program Networks

The "Community-Based Program Networks" workshop at the 1987 National Literacy Seminar was one of the first opportunities I had to be exposed to community-based efforts in other provinces. It was the first chance to learn something about the Regroupement des Groupes Populaires d'Alphabetisation du Quebec. Although frustratingly short, the workshop was a much-needed introduction. It made me realize how important it is to link with people from other parts of Canada; to discover whether we face similar issues and questions, and to compare the solutions we have come up with.

The community-based network with which I am most familiar is the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy (MTML). When it was first established, MTML was active in trying to initiate literacy programs in Metro Toronto. The founding group looked for training materials and became convinced that the pre-packaged American programs were of limited relevance to Canada. They looked for and developed other methods. But they did adopt some features of those programs. For example, they did use volunteers.

More recently, since the number of literacy programs in the Toronto area has grown, MTML has become a vital link between adult literacy programs. The most active members tend to be from programs which define themselves as community-based.

A definition of 'community-based literacy' in Metro Toronto is still not absolute. But it is probably true that most programs see themselves as accountable to and directed by their community. The understanding of 'community' may differ from program to program. One vision of what is a community-based literacy program was put forward at a meeting in March, 1987. This meeting brought together some thirty literacy workers from programs in greater Metro Toronto, Ottawa and Kingston. The vision was "a program that was partially run by learners and incorporating a broad range of learning possibilities that would appeal to all of the needs of adult learners; this program would be like a learning centre and would be accessible, informal, responsive and linked to the community with a membership that had a strong sense of ownership of the program."

To understand why community-based literacy programs have developed, it may be helpful to have some background on the way in which literacy has been handled in Ontario.

At present, in Ontario, the Ministry of Education has no policy concerning adult literacy. Continuing education is itself discretionary, which means that about half of the school boards in the province have no continuing education programs. Where school boards do provide adult basic education, most teachers are in part-time, non-unionized, positions. Any pro-

fessional development or linking with other programs they do on their own time. Colleges, under the newly-created Ministry of Skills Development, provide skills- or job-related programs. The Ontario Basic Skills program introduced in 1987 was the first college involvement in basic education in a number of years.

Despite this lack of support, literacy programs have sprung up across Ontario in the past decade. The Ontario Community Literacy Program was set up (originally under the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture) to fund community programs. The funding from this source was the first provincial support many programs received. In 1987, the Ontario Community Literacy Program was transferred to the Ministry of Skills Development.

In Toronto, community-based programs have been established and are often maintained through cooperation with institutions. Each program has a unique history, and each relates to the local board of education, community centre or community college in slightly different ways.

Recently, members of MTML met with Alvin Curling, the Minister of Skills Development. He acknowledged that community-based program have an important place in the range of adult literacy programs that are needed. He seemed to see community-based programs as the 'entry' most connected to learners and potential learners.

The close links to the community is a vital aspect of community-based literacy. In Toronto, through MTML, programs have been able to explore what this link to the community means. Much of the discussion has taken place over the past few years, over the same period as increased pockets of funding for literacy have become available. The uncertainty of the funding has meant we have also begun to explore the ways in which our programs are affected by various funding mechanisms. We have begun to ask ourselves: What funding mechanisms coiuld provide core funding while respecting our mandate to be accountable to the community? What are some models for funding that should be considered as literacy policy is developed?

Community-based program across the country would all be stronger with a more regular exchange of issues and questions such as these.

TANNIS ATKINSON works at the Toronto Alpha Centre and is a member of the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy. She is currently chairman of the MCL Publications Committee.

ANN M. GAUVIN

Resource Networks

The 'issue session' on Resource Networks at the National Literacy Seminar looked at three areas of concern: (1) how can regional and national networks complement one another? (2) how can the various resource centres meet the needs of learners, teachers, tutors, libraries, government, funders, media, etc.? (3) should resource networks simply reflect what is available in all areas or should they actively select and promote exemplary materials?

Rpresentatives from national and provincial literacy organizations, together with individuals involved in literacy programs in large and small centres across Canada, began the session with an exchange of information about services relating to resources and moved into an in-depth update of the MCL's LEARN (Literacy Education and Resource Network) project.

The LEARN Committee had been established by MCL to develop a structure that would facilitate the flow of information nationally and encourage the development of provincial networks. The LEARN Committee proposed an independent National Clearinghouse and Resource Centre providing access to literacy and resources for learners, teachers, groups and organizations. The LEARN Committee had drafted a proposal for a one-year project which would include a feasibility study as well as a design and implementation phase at an estimated costs of $204,500.

There was consensus among the group that National Clearinghouse and Resource Centre would be useful to everyone and particularly beneficial in isolated areas. All national organizations present felt that they could provide links to this national centre. However, many participants felt that it would be essential to develop provincial networks first and that, when money is available, it should not all go to the national centre at the expense of the provincial networks. There is a need for much more discussion, particularly concerning the LEARN project. Money received for this project should not be spent totally in a feasibility study and the study should include an examination of the role of a clearinghouse.

The LEARN Committee should be reorganized. It should be broad-based, struck in consultation with the MCL membership and include learners, librarians with literacy experience, practitioners who reflect different modes of delivery, provincial and territorial representatives, bilingual representatives, native representatives, representatives from the book industry, and National Seminar participants.

This workshop made two recommendations only, due to a lack of time. First, that the LEARN proposal be reshaped by establishing a broad-based committee which would be formed through consultation with the MCL membership, conference participants and other interested individuals. Second, there should be cooperative development of national and provincial clearinghouses with funding for all, including a common base for cataloguing collections.

ANN GAUVIN has served as chairperson of the MCL LEARN Committee and is Literacy Coordinator with the Quebec Literacy Working Group.

LITERACY RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Many questions surround literacy work. We could be asking, for example:

Why has Canada been undisturbed by limited literacy for so long, and what is making it more of an issue now?

Under what circumstances to adults decide to learn to read and write? What variety of programs do they need to be well served?

What makes for quality in this variety of programs - what teaching methods, organization, funding and control?

What is it about the school system that allows so many to come out not reading and writing? Can this be changed?

A few questions are getting attention.

LAUBACH LITERACY OF CANADA

Laubach Literacy of Canada is conducting research in conjunction with its Industrial Literacy Program, funded by a CEIC Innovations grant. The Program aims to tutor 300 basic or functional illiterates, two hours a week, in Cape Breton, St. Catharines and Winnipeg. As of December 1987, 76 learners were involved, in 64 companies. The research component aims to compile data on literacy skill development, using various standardized tests and the Laubach Skill Books. It will relate skill development to employee productivity, the level of employee-supervisor communication, accident rates and absenteeism. Contact Laubach Literacy, P.O. Box 6548, Station A, Saint John, N.B. E2L 4R9.

ALBERTA

Factors contributing to adult (il)literacy have been studied at the University of Alberta. Descriptions of individual profiles of two groups of adults were compared with those of regular and low-achieving students in grades 9, 6 and 3. Twenty-six prisoners, 26 mainstream-society adults (both groups functioning about a mid-grade 5 reading level), and 26 each of regular and low achieving readers in grades 9, 6 and 3 were involved. Data was obtained through interviews and completion of various tasks and questionnaires.

Results showed that both groups of adults within the various categories shared more negative than positive characteristics. But an examination of the profiles showed considerable variation within profiles. Various sets of factors or systems impacted on each individual. The overall pattern of positive and negative forces was significant in describing (il)literacy development; the greater the number of positive encounters within support systems, the greater the possibility of the individual becoming literate, and vice versa.

Programs for literacy development must take into account the present characteristics of the adults as well as the factors from their previous life history.

Information: Profesor W. T. Fagan, at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Centre for Policy Studies in Education at the University of British Columbia, in conjunction with the Canadian Association for Adult Education, is working on a study of how people use reading and writing - particularly where those uses are changing as part of broader economic and political changes - in a reversal of the usual studies "about illiteracy" that set out to count people who cannot read and write.

As the research develops, the project will be seeking ways to incorporate input or commentary from practitioners into the final writing.

Contact Richard Darville or Kjell Rubenson, Centre for Policy Studies in Education, BC, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z5.

ONTARIO

The Participatory Research Group of Toronto is producing a booklet on community-based literacy programs in the Toronto area. The research process involved participants (staff, students and volunteers) of three community-based programs. Three programs were chosen for in-depth study, although the booklet will outline information on thirteen community-based programs. The booklet will highlight the points raised by discussions which the researchers facilitated with the representatives from the three programs. It will also recount some conclusions which these representatives came to when they all met at a weekend retreat.

The booklet will be available in late 1988 from the Participatory Research Group, 299 College Street, #309, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4.

CALL FOR PAPERS

CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES/LES CAHIERS DE LA FEMME is planning a double issue on "Women and Literacy" for Winter 1988. We invite LEARNERS, TUTORS or FACILITATORS to send a short account of their experience as women in a literacy program. We are also seeking reflective articles, in English or in French, on any aspect of women and literacy, or on specific programs for women and/or growing out of women's groups.

CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES/LES CAHIERS DE LA FEMME is a feminist journal dealing with issues of importance and interest to all. The "Women and Literacy" issue will include material from learners and tutors /facilitators in literacy programs, articles on projects in various parts of Canada and in other parts of the world, more general articles on women and literacy, book reviews and a bibliography.

Articles should be no longer than ten pages (2500 words) in length, typed and double-spaced. Please send two copies along with a brief biographical note, an abstract and any photographs and/or graphics to illustrate your work. Final selection will be decided by the editorial board.

Please send your article to:

CWS/cf
212 Founders College
York University, 4700 Keele Street
Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3

by June 1st, 1988.

ALPHABÉTISATION LITERACY

MOVEMENT FOR CANADIAN LITERACY • RASSEMBLEMENT CANADIEN POUR L'ALPHABÉTISATION

SPRING 1989

VOLUME 13, NO. 2

LITERACY/
ALPHABÉTISATION

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Publications Committee
Tannis Atkinson, chair
Richard Darville
Louise Dagenais-
Mary Norton

Editor:
Joan Mansfield

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LITERACY ALPHABÉTISATION

MOVEMENT FOR CANADIAN LITERACY • RASSEMBLEMENT CANADIEN POUR L'ALPHABÉTISATION

Volume 13, Number 2, Spring 1989

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EDITORIAL

As we were finishing this issue, MCL learned that its funding from the Secretary of State was less certain than we would like. The department is reducing the amount of money provided to cover the costs of running national advocacy groups.

In the past few years, MCL has grown. When it was a group with no budget, the only people who could be involved were people who worked in government jobs, whose employer could send them to meetings. Some of these people were in touch with the adults learning to read and write, some were not. No adults learning to read and write were involved.

One of the projects that MCL is working on now is a committee that would bring learners together to find out how to get learner groups started all across the country. There are two learner representatives on the Board of Directors of MCL. MCL is also trying to organize celebrations for International Literacy Year, 1990. We want to make sure that this journal comes out more often, so that people working in literacy around the country can know what is happening in other places and can always be learning from one another.

We would like to do a research project to find out, from adult learners, what makes a good literacy program. We would also like to set up some way for people to be able to find out about books and programs in all parts of the country. In this issue of the Journal, we describe these projects in more detail.

But if we have limited money for an office and for staff, how can we do all the projects we planned for? We know that MCL is not the only national group that is in this situation? Will literacy programs be next?

WE NEED YOUR HELP! We may call on you to work on some of the projects. You could also write to Secretary of State Jerry Wiener to let him know how important it is to maintain a strong national literacy advocacy organization.

While MCL may be having some problems right now, we need more than ever to work collectively to make real change in the literacy field. Contact your provincial literacy organization to find out how you can help. Thank you for your support.

Tannis Atkinson, Publications Committee

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 1987-1988

Robin Stonehouse

Since our National Literacy Seminar in October 1987, the Movement for Canadian Literacy has been growing at a phenomenal rate. It moved from being a totally voluntary organization with funding only from sale of memberships, pins and posters, to an organization supported by a grant from the Secretary of State and donations from a variety of ministries and corporations.

As we have become more recognized as an organization available to requests for information, our membership has continued to grow and more people look for our Journal as an information source on literacy in Canada.

Forging partnerships amongst the national groups acting as advocates for literacy has been and will continue to be a major focus for the Movement for Canadian Literacy. The National Literacy Coalition, which was chaired by MCL, resulted in the Cedar Glen Declaration and an Open Letter to the Prime Minister which appeared in Maclean's Magazine and the Globe & Mail. In February 1988, the National Literacy Coalition chose to redefine itself as a sub-committee of MCL's Policy Committee. It is now called the National Organizations Committee and is composed of twelve national organizations.

The National Organizations Committee has continued to lobby for support for literacy programs and is pursuing the area of increased public education and awareness on the issue of literacy.

The Policy Committee has begun to address a national literacy policy for Canada. This can be achieved through consultations, research and writing, and critiques of existing policies. The Policy Committee prepares for and works with the National Organizations Committee.

Another exciting challenge is facing the Movement, and that is how to coordinate and promote International Literacy Year in 1990. The Movement is participating with other Canadian organizations in the International Task Force for the International Year. MCL plans to establish a Canadian International Literacy Year steering committee to coordinate activity in Canada and to publish a newsletter to disseminate information. MCL hopes to lay the foundation for heightened awareness and activity in literacy throughout the 1990s.

The Learners' Conferencing Committee is well into the planning of a training event for learners in the fall of 1989. A small group of learners would come from each province to learn about the organizing of learner-centred events. This Committee envisages this group of trainees developing many learners' conferences/special events across Canada throughout 1990.

RICHARD DARVILLE and LOUISE MILLAR at MCL'S first bilingual election at the 1988 Annual General Meeting.
Photo: Roger Davies

ROSE DOIRON (left) and SALLY McBETH receive the 1988 National Literacy Prize from MCL for Rose's book, MY NAME IS ROSE, published by East End Literacy Press, Toronto. Photo: Roger Davies

The MCL Board of Directors has kept alive the dream of a national information and clearinghouse network. Such a network can only develop after a clearinghouse feasibility study has been done. An advisory committee has been established and is helping the development of this project.

The Publications Committee has recommended that the journal LITERACY/ALPHABETISATION move to a new stage in its development. The Journal was published once in the past year. It is to be put it on a more stable financial footing with increased staff support in order to enhance it as a publication. To make it a truly national Journal, it will be printing its articles in English and French.

One of the essential MCL committees has been the Organizational Development Committee. The by-laws and constitution of MCL were created ten years ago. It is to our credit that we have grown too big for them. Changes will allow the organization to continue to grow in an orderly fashion.

We have certainly made good use of the services and support of our Executive and Finance Committees. Their careful attention to details, and their willingness to be innovative and learn as they go, has mean that they have kept on top of the changes that come with rapid growth.

It has been a good year for me. The presidency was a position I had expected to wait two years to take over, but when Marianne Williams stepped down to become National Coordinator, I was elected to the position in May 1988. It has been a time for me to learn a great deal. Fortunately I have a strong team to support me. MCL has a strong and dedicated Board of twenty-five members from across Canada. The Executive provides depth of experience and a sincere commitment to the organization. When you add to this a competent, hardworking office staff, you can understand how we have managed to grow quickly.

I am looking forward to the next year and with all of you, the Board of Directors, members and friends, I know we will see literacy continue to advance in Canada.

GLADYS NEALE of the Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation receives the 1988 National Literacy Prize from MCL presented by (left) CATHY WRIGHT (MCL Past President). Photo: Roger Davies

LEARNERS ACTION COMMITTEE

Roger David (NS), chair
Agnes Barnes (NS)
Joe Binger (Yukon)
Bram Fisher (Ontario)
Robin Silverman (Ontario)
David Speakman (NWT)

The committee has been working to bring learners together from across Canada. We hope to promote learners' interests through the rest of this year and into 1990, International Literacy Year.

We are proposing a national learners' training event for the fall of 1989. This would involve at least four learners, as well as one program person, from each province and territory. The purpose of this three-day workshop would be to train learners who would return to their province and territory to organize learners.

The first step towards the training event has already taken place. In March, learners from across Canada were brought together in Toronto for two days. This group is the steering committee which will work to plan the national learners' training event.

We see the need for a follow-up event for the same people, late in 1990, to share experiences, learn from each other about organizing and find more ways to encourage learners to speak for themselves.

We hope that a range of activities will be happening in the provinces and territories throughout 1990, and we feel certain that learners will have a major role in structuring, promoting and carrying out these events. We hope that events will be celebrations as well as developments.

Throughout these activities, we hope that literacy workers will support the efforts of the learners. The success of this project will depend on the support given to learners.

PINS FOR PROMOTING LITERACY

The Literacy logo is reproduced as a gold-coloured lapel pin.

P R I C E S

1 - 9 Pins	@ $2.00 each
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Please send _____ pins
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Use this form to order pins from:

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9 St Joseph Street,
Suite 304
TORONTO (Ontario) M4Y 1J6

POLICY COMMITTEE

Susan Hoddinott, chair
Richard Darville
Janet Longmate
Isabel Madeira-Voss
(retired from committee)
Robin Stonehouse
(occasional participant)
Cathy Wright

The Policy Committee of the Movement for Canadian Literacy has been meeting for about a year and a half. After some initial difficulty figuring out what 'policy' meant, we eventually decided to work on defining the literacy-related government policy and the literacy programming arrangements that MCL will advocate.

How to work on this also required some figuring out. We thought that obviously a handful of people could not just sit down and decide on literacy-related policy. The first task is to get more people involved. So we will work with projects that will help the literacy movement move towards a common agenda for policy.

A first project is to prepare a small publication, LEARNERS SPEAK OUT, that is developed out of learners' statements and that is intended for learners to use. With the help of the Learners Action Committee, we gathered reports from learners' conferences and events that have happened across the country. We hired a writer to work with these reports and to pull out of them the kinds of things learners have said about

- past experiences of school
- adult programs and what learners need for them to work well
- what to say to government.

(By government, we mean not only the politicians and civil servants in federal and provincial governments, but also community organizations and literacy programs themselves.)

The booklet is written up partly in general statements about programs, partly in statements like those made by learners at conferences and in programs. It is intended to boost discussions among learners, at future conferences as well as in classes, with tutors and others. We also hope that it will be read and taken to heart by community leaders and politicians who are closer to the handles of power. This booklet will be available soon.

The Policy Committee's other project is to develop a discussion paper on GOOD PRACTICE IN ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION. The 'good practice' it will discuss includes things like accessibility of programs, levels of funding for literacy work, working conditions in programs, and training for tutors and teachers.

To pull the document together, we will do two things. The firstis to survey exising guidelines and practice-statements developed in Canada and internationally, and with an advisory committee prepare a draft paper. This draft will form the basis for consultations and interviews with literacy practitioners and organizers around the country, with learners at regional and provincial learners' conferences, and finally at a practitioners' conference held during International Literacy Year.

Pulling this together will be both an educational process - collecting and disseminating ideas - and a consultation process - testing them out against practitioners' and learners experience - for MCL. The document should be distributed at the end of 1990. We hope both projects strengthen the ability of people working in literacy to shape development of that work.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Tannis Atkinson (Ontario), chair
Louise Dagenais (Quebec)
Richard Darville (BC)
Mary Norton (Alberta)

When the Publications Committee met in Ottawa in February, one of our main purposes was to outline a proposal for hiring an MCL publications staff person. By the end of our meeting, we had developed a rationale and job description for a 'communications coordinator' and laid out an annual publications plan.

We started our meeting by asking: "Why is LITERACY/ ALPHABETISATION important? (While not the only MCL publication, this journal has been out main focus for a while.) Our responses included:

- "The journal is central to MCL. It is the most visible thing MCL does ..."
- "It's a place for people to find out what is going on in the rest of the country ... a way for all members to learn from each other."
- "It's a forum for discussion and debate about issues."
- "It's a way to get information about teaching ..."
- "It's a way to inform members about what MCL is doing ..."

ALPHABETISATION LITERACY

In these answers, we had set out the purposes for publishing the journal and, as it would turn out, for publishing some other periodicals as well. Our answers also provided the rationale for hiring a staff person.

The 'need to know' is at the root of our answers. To help people know, and to keep informed about and involved in issues and developments, MCL needs to communicate with its members. It is to this end that we propose the hiring of a 'communications coordinator.' This person would keep informed about current developments in the literacy field and would coordinate communications of this and other information with and among MCL members.

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR COMMITTEE

Joyce White, chair
Agnes Barnes (NS)
Ann Gauvin (Que)
Alan Mackenzie (PEI)
Isabel Madeira-Voss
(Ontario)

The Movement for Canadian Literacy is poised to serve as the promoter and animator of literacy activities for ILY 1990. We hope that the activities will result in the establishment of a long-term mechanism for the enhancement of literacy in Canada.

Our plan of action will include a wide range of activities under the following headings:

- creating public awareness
- creating and strengthening literacy structures
- stimulating a 'Great Debate' about literacy
- stimulating research and evaluation

Creating public awareness

1) Produce and distribute posters, handouts, pins with the ILY logo to promote and publicize the year.

2) Compile a promotional kit to identify possible and established projects for local, provincial and national organizations.

3) Publish a bi-monthly newsletter to circulate information about ILY activities, provincial and national policies and actions throughout the country.

4) Coordinate workshops for journalists around issues of literacy.

5) Identify the media that will facilitate the production of 'Moments for Literacy,' prime-time TV spots for learners and practitioner profiles.

6) Sponsor a poster contest which would be a visual message for publicizing ILY.

7) Participate in the 'Book Voyage.' Participants in literacy programs throughout the world will be encouraged to write in a special ILY book. Its value would be symbolic and participatory, much like the Olympic Torch. Entries in the book might include statements by learners about how their lives have been changed by learning how to read and write, statements by world leaders and famous people about he importance of literacy, and so on.

Creating and strengthening literacy structures

1) International Literacy Year is a celebration of all those involved in literacy: learners, practitioners, administrators, advocates, front-line workers, and others. We especially want to support adult literacy learners and join with them in voicing their rights as learners and as citizens. Thus we are supporting the establishment of local learners networks as well as representaion at all national meetings.

2) A learner representative will accompany an MCL board member to the International Task Force on Literacy meetings, thus ensuring learner involvement and active participation in all plans for ILY

Stimulating a Great Debate about literacy

MCL wants to facilitate a process that leads to the creation of an appropriate Canadian structure for ILY ensuring that all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are contacted and included in advocacy or promotional activities. The goals of the Canadian Coalition for International Literacy Year will be to exchange, inspire and take action together when possible. The objectives will be to share information, support each other's individual actions, identify common activities, as well as set priorities for political action.

Research and evaluation

1) MCL has been working with UNISYS Canada to establish ways of using electronics to connect people from across the country. The electronic conference is envisioned as a meeting stage for academics, literacy tutors and students to discuss issues and to facilitate cross-Canada communications on literacy. The provision of this service will allow sites in Canada with access to a personal computer to be in touch for a nominal Bell Canada fee.

2) National literacy conference will be organized by the ILY Committee in collaboration with the MCL Policy Committee, to review the conclusions of their research project, Good Practice in Adult Education.

3) MCL has been approached by Carleton University to co-sponsor a 1990 summer 'institute' program for literacy practitioners and preliminary discussions are under way.

LEARN COMMITTEE

Carol Sears (NB), chair
Teresa Campbell (BC)
Ann Gauvin (Que)

LEARN (Literary Education and Resource Network) is a project that arose because the Movement for Canadian Literacy saw a need for an independent national resource centre providing information on literacy resources for all those involved in literacy: learners, teachers, groups and organizations.

The LEARN committee recognizes that governments, business, funders, the voluntary sector and the education systems all need information.

Among the points in favour of a national network of literacy resources are the following:

· literacy workers, learners, administrators, supporters and other interested parties need to know of resources available in a broader mode than that of their own area:

· areas with a tradition of emphasizing a single program need to be aware of other possibilities and the effectiveness of a variety of programs;

· in a mobile population, learners in particular need to be able to access programs when they move to a new area.

This committee is in need of new members with a strong interest in working toward a viable and accessible resource network for the literacy community.

Pierrette Lavoie-Ste-Marie

THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT: TOOL OR TORMENT?

When I consider the topic of the needs assessment as a tool in developing skills-training programs, I am reminded of two old principles which have often caused me to question the relevance of my efforts to provide individualized training.

The first principle comes from an article by Bercovitz(1) and may be stated as follows: "How can I say what I want to learn when I don't know", or even -"when I don't know what I don't know." This first assertion is confirmed by experience. During the training process learners often realise that they did not know something: how could they have said so before?

Needs or Problems?

The second principle that troubles me may be defined something like this: the learning process should begin with the problems of the learners, rather than with their needs. But Charlot(2) states: "The learner will be even more likely to resist revealing his difficulties to a trainer and a group of strangers than he is to force himself to fabricate a set of needs."

Turning again to the concept of needs, I settle on another of Charlot's assertions: "Learners usually arrive with very vague expectations. Requiring them to make a clear statement of their needs is not involving them in a learner-centred process; on the contrary, it makes them immediately aware of their inferiority in relation to the practitioner."

How do we get around this? How nice it was when we were the experts, at the helm of a program concocted in its entirety by the Ministry of Education! Then we could tell students what was good for them! However, we cannot disregard what we know is true; people learn when they are involved in their learning. Furthermore, adults have lives and experiences which the practitioners cannot ignore .... Back we go to the search for solutions.

How are we to tailor learners' training so as to equip them with the knowledge and skills that they can use in real-life situations?

In my view, making an assessment of learning needs is a pedagogical act and a process which should develop in students a skill which they will be able to use consciously when they are determining their own needs. This pedagogical act must therefore be made up of different stages, each preparing the way for the next.

Problems or Interests?

One way to start can be through the learners' interests. "I would like to ... I would like to know ... If I knew that, I could ... I know somebody who can ... I would like to know why it works like that .."

After a few brief, positive experiences of this kind, the learners are able to start identifying what they feel to be a lack. "I can't .. I don't know .. the reason I don't do that .. is because I .. " But Charlot's remark should be kept in mind and the learners should not feel in any way diminished by these kinds of admission. This approach will be useful when the members of the group have got to know each other, when they have had a chance to point out their

positive qualities and when a spirit of mutual help has been established.

But what about their real needs as individuals, those which prevent them from experiencing personal fulfilment and from participating fully in their environment? Should not these be the focus of the training, if autonomy is the objective?

To put it briefly, the inclusion of needs assessment as part of the training program involves setting up a process which will change and evolve as learners acquire a set of skills which they will be able to utilize in a satisfactory way in this process.

George's Case

An example will show how this process translates into action. George is a literacy learner who talks very little about himself, whether in the group or one-on-one. One evening, however, he mentions that he has never had a good job .. "Job application forms are a pain in the neck." The literacy practitioner makes a suggestion: "What do you think about our taking a look at job application forms during our language exercises? Perhaps there are others who would be interested in looking at these too."

The practitioner then continues with the survey of the work-related interests of the participants. The exercise may arouse enthusiasm or there may be little interest among the group. The latter does not mean that interest in the subject will not be expressed some other time.

If the group does show interest, George will have the chance to work on job applications. The practitioner, however, knows George and is well aware that he has behavioural problems and cannot tolerate authority. What is the good of telling him, at this stage, that he will always have problems with his boss so long as he does not change his attitude? It is most likely that this information is of no use to George at this stage. He may even reject the information out of hand and feel misunderstood yet again.

If the work theme arouses any enthusiasm, other learners will show an interest in talking about the work they do and about their lives. George will have the opportunity to listen and talk with the other students, who may have similar or differing opinions.

While he is broadening his knowledge of the world of work, George may also have the chance to tell the group about the hobbies he is good at, like painting, auto-mechanics or cabinet-making (there are questions about leisure activities on job application forms). This reveals the positive aspects of his personality to himself and to the others. Perhaps after several positive experiences where talking about practical interests has helped him make progress in learning in his own way and at his own pace, George will then be able to discern what it would be useful for him to know.

Gradually, George may perhaps become aware that he is an important agent in his own learning process. Maybe he will, in time, express an interest in knowing himself better and discover that he must change certain behaviours in order to keep a job.

The point of this example is simply to stress the importance of proceeding in stages. At each stage the learner can be the driving force behind what is learned. Whether this is knowledge, skills or behaviour, the practitioner will have fulfilled her mandate to help equip the adult learner.

How Much Time Should be Spent on Needs Assessment?

Practitioners are often preoccupied with the practical question of how much time they should

spend gathering information about needs. In reality, the needs expressed may touch on all facets of living: they may be physiological needs, or the need for security, for belonging, for recognition and for self-fulfilment. We cannot take on everything. Nor can we enable learners to become autonomous and take their place in society after 45 or 90 hours of training. What we are doing can be considered a direction .. .. we set out with our students and when we reach a crossroads they will carry on by themselves.

But this does not answer the question of how much time we should give to needs assessment. If we have the feeling during this stage that the learners are learning nothing, only waiting for what they came for - French (or English) and math - this will put a limit on it.

If, however, we incorporate basic skills into this phase, we are able to pick out needs without the learners feeling that they are wasting their time. When we talk in the group about work, we can employ key words and simple phrases, writing them on the blackboard and repeating them. Here again the rhythm at which we do this depends on the group and the individuals in it. At first it may be only an hour until the participants have run out of ideas. That is fine. Later, when they realise that they are doing something worthwhile, they will take more time.

The practitioner's past experience will prove useful in identifying training needs. At introductory meetings and during classes, she will take note of the life situations of the learners, through their anecdotes and comments. This information will allow her to assess some training needs.

Should the literacy practitioner take the liberty of suggesting themes to the learners and acting on her own assessment of their needs? Why should she not play her role of expert? Isn't this one of her duties?

The Risk of Manipulation

It is clearly possible for a practitioner to manipulate learners because she has the power. But what does manipulate mean, exactly? It means to have someone do something without being aware that it is not their own idea.

There is a way to avoid this danger. A subject can be proposed to the learners in such a way that they adopt it and participate in developing and shaping it. In this way, the group acquires enthusiasm for the subject. If the group shows no response, it is better to let the subject drop for the time being.

For this approach, the practitioner requires the skills of facilitator, a degree of self-confidence, and the willingness and ability to adapt to the group. In my opinion, this is where the tendency to manipulate will show itself.

Insecurity is likely to be a barrier. Obviously the person who has gone to the trouble of making studies and doing research wants to put this information to good use with learners. And if the group takes up a subject with which she is less comfortable, then she could be tempted to sidetrack the discomfort. This is human and as it should be. She will be able to involve the members of the group in collecting the information she needs for her research. It will evolve along with the group. The group contributes to the knowledge that is its content. The practitioner remains the process leader and facilitator.

The important thing is to adopt this philosophy in practice and get on with implementing it by trial and error, always striving for the

participation of learners in their own learning process.

A Request for Information

There is something else that I am curious to know, and that is, how is this needs assessment process put into practice with a heterogeneous group? Is there anybody who has instituted such a process and seen its effects on the ability of learners to become involved in their own training process?

Is there anybody who would be willing to share their experience?

References

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(2) CHARLOT, B, 1988. "Pourquoi un adulte s'engage-t-il dans un processus de formation continue?" Ibid.

PIERRETTE LAVOIE-STE-MARIE is a journalist and adult education consultant in Brossard, Quebec.

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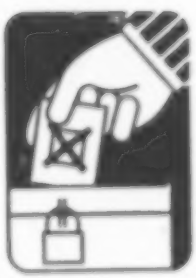

VOTING AND LITERACY

Research by the National Anti-Poverty Organization on the issue of access to voting procedures by illiterate voters has revealed problems with accessibility for other social groups as well. NAPO has written to the Chief Electoral Officer to express its concern and has met with him and members of his staff. There are plans to follow up this issue in coming months.

On the issue of literacy, NAPO has recommended a special information campaign targeted to the illiterate; funds and materials for literacy groups to use in helping learners 'walk through' the voting process; and the addition of party logos and colours on ballot sheets. Elections Canada was unable to implement any of these recommendations before the last election, although a learning kit for learners was available for use by literacy groups.

As regards ballots, similar changes were suggested to the Ontario government by an MPP. Candidates' pictures are used in elections in the North West Territories. The Elections Act allows people who cannot read to have a friend or relative of the deputy returning officer mark their ballot for them. However, they must swear an oath stating that they are incapable of voting and indicate why.

The Southam literacy report has shown that 'basic' illiterates (people who can barely read and write) are less likely to vote than people with higher literacy skills. Efforts to make the process more accessible to basic illiterates may help increase voting.

NAPO welcomes suggestions on this issue. It will be getting in touch with the Chief Electoral Officer before he makes his report to the next session of the new Parliament.

NEWS BRIEFS

A GUEST COLUMN ON LITERACY ISSUES

In the December 1988 issue of the newsletter Education and Training Services Update published by Control Data Canada, Inc., Paul Jones of the Business Task Force on Literacy has written a guest editorial on the need for the Canadian corporate world to give priority to literacy programs in the workplace.

Alison Piper, communications coordinator for Control Data Canada, reports that representatives of literacy organizations are invited to submit one- or two-page editorials (500 words) on some aspect of the literacy problem to this quarterly newsletter. Produced by the education and training division of Control Data Canada, the Education and Training Services Update outlines the programs that Control Data and its partners have put into place.

Editorials can be sent to Alison Piper, Communications Coordinator, at Control Data Canada, Ltd., 110 Bloor Street West, Suite 202, Toronto (Ontario) M5S 2W7. For further information, call (416) 964-8845.

POSTAGE STAMP FOR INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

World Literacy of Canada has asked the stamp advisory committee of Canada Post to consider producing a special postage stamp to mark International Literacy Year, 1990. Such a stamp will acknowledge the efforts made by thousands of adult learners and by literacy groups, and will help break down the stigma associated with illiteracy.

Organizations and individuals are invited to communicate support for this idea by writing to Sylvain Cloutier, Stamp Advisory Committee, Canada Post Corporation, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 1H7, and sending a copy of any letter to World Literacy of Canada, 692 Coxwell Avenue, Toronto (Ontario) M4@ 386.

PROMOTING LITERACY THROUGH THEATRE

Between August 1989 and the summer of 1990, high school students and other community organizations across Canada will have the chance to see a play specially written for them by Canada's finest playwrights on the issue and impact of literacy. The play will tell many stories which will converge to stress the idea that "literacy is development is freedom."

World Literacy of Canada is creating, mounting and touring this professional play and targeting it to Canadian high schools, community groups, libraries, reformatories and reserves, as a way of publicizing International Literacy Year 1990 and increasing public awareness of the importance of literacy.

World Literacy organizers hope the play will encourage students to stay in school in order to guarantee their future personal freedom and opportunity, and encourage them to participate in educational and fundraising projects to promote the cause of literacy in Canada and around the world.

Groups and organizations are being invited to host the play as a literacy fundraising/awareness event in their community. For information contact Scott Dickson, special projects director, at (416) 920-2606 or World Literacy of Canada at 692 Coxwell Avenue, Toronto (Ontario) M4C 386, telephone (416) 465-4667.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES BACK JOINT APPROACH TO LITERACY

Adult literacy is the highest national priority of the membership of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, following its last annual meeting. Community colleges are involved in adult literacy programs, as are other public institutions, volunteer organizations, the labour movement, and business and industrial organizations.

Cooperating and exchanging expertise and resources with community partners is the approach that the Association favours to finding solutions to the 'silent tragedy' of illiteracy. For more information on ACCC's involvement with this issue, contact president Richard Mackie and executive director Tom Norton at 110 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto (Ontario) M4R 1A3, telephone (416) 489-5925.

CANADIAN BILINGUAL ADULT LITERACY THESAURUS

A study funded by the Secretary of State's literacy secretariat, under the sponsorship of the Canadian Library Association, will determine the feasibility of producing a thesaurus for the use of adult literacy resource centres, clearing houses, libraries and community-based programs in Canada.

The proposed thesaurus is to provide terms which are accurate in reflecting the developments in adult literacy in Canada. It will help achieve unity of indexing terminology within the field, to facilitate the organization of literacy materials and the flow and exchange of information and materials across the country.

NEWS BRIEFS

LITERACY AND FRENCH-SPEAKING CANADIANS

Few facts are available with regard to literacy rates among French-speaking Canadians, and the Institut Canadien d'Education des Adultes and the federation of francophones outside Quebec (FFHQ) have undertaken a research project to provide this information.

Last summer, organizations across Canada serving French-speaking Canadians were asked to provide information from their membership in the form of answers to a questionnaire. Information was collected on the literacy situation as it affects francophones, on the resources available to help solve the problem, and on government literacy policies and programs.

Taking part in this survey will provide the opportunity for members of French-language organizations and institutions to reflect on the causes of the high rate of illiteracy among the French-speaking, the importance of literacy in French-language populations, and the question of mother-tongue literacy.

CLOSED CAPTIONS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY

Research studies have shown that the use of captioned television can be of benefit in literacy training. A study by the Canadian Captioning Development Agency in cooperation with TV Ontario confirms the potential benefits and recommends a pilot field study.

With the help of a grant from the Canadian studies directorate of the Secretary of State, the captioning agency is producing a half-hour video exploring the educational uses of captioned television in literacy work.

LITERACY WORK IN QUEBEC:

Urgent Need for Quality Services

Hélène Blais

In 1986, the mandate was given for research to make an inventory of every literacy program instituted by every organization involved in literacy in every region of Quebec. This research was a joint initiative of the inter-regional team of regional literacy animators, the adult education directorate of the Ministry of Education, and the provincial literacy committee of the school boards; it was funded by the Quebec ministry of Education.

The inventory of the adult literacy system took place between March 16 and May 2 1986, with my assignment as provincial coordinator beginning in January 1986 and ending in June 1987. A set of questions provided a guide as the basis of the investigation and made it possible for each responding association to give an individualised profile of its practices according to an outline with eight sections: the nature of the organization, its action plan, the structure of its services, its budget and expenditure, its staff, learner population, program evaluation and production of teaching material.

The recommendations of the respondents centred on two principal areas : administration (structure, funding and working conditions) and andragogy (issues of orientation and ideology, delivery of services, and other issues in adult education).

Working Conditions

In Quebec, 51.4 percent of adult literacy practitioners are volunteers and 31.4 percent of staff are involved in training, with 7.4 percent in coordination and administration, 7.3 percent in literacy awareness activities, and 4.5 percent in professional services.

Adult literacy is the preserve of women; they account for 90.8 percent of all literacy practitioners, 85 percent of field staff and 84 percent of volunteers.

Literacy practitioners are employed on a part-time basis and paid on a fee-for-service basis, with no employment security or contract. Their work classification (as indicated above) is unclear and continual staff turnover prevents the employer from committing financial resources to the training of literacy workers on an on-going basis and results in skills training that is functional and short-term rather than thorough and long-term.

Practitioners are often responsible for their own skills training and any costs. They are seldom paid to attend meetings, conferences or workshops.

Within the voluntary groups, poor working conditions, low wages (around $10,000 to $15,000) a year), work overload, the precarious situation of the practitioners and of the groups themselves very often overwhelm the goodwill and stamina of practitioners.

Voluntary groups often lack the funds adequately to supervise the practitioners in the field. In some areas of Quebec, institutional and para-institutional services are closed to the overworked public-education groups, the poor relations in the current system who maintain training programs for literacy practitioners. There are, however, other areas where the voluntary groups collaborate closely with school boards and make use of their services.

To improve working conditions for practitioners, respondents proposed

that their employment status be made stable, and that the practitioners employed by voluntary groups be required to have teaching qualifications and experience.

They also recommended that voluntary organizations be funded so as to be able to hire more staff, with better wages and better working conditions, particularly practitioners who do not have another "full-time" job during the day.

What Future Awaits Literacy in Quebec?

Respondents of the research investigation highlighted weaknesses in the literacy movement in Quebec. We focus on the following points as essential :

1. Simplified structure and staffing at the Quebec ministry of Education.

2. Proper funding for all kinds of literacy organizations, regardless of type and location in Quebec, in order to solve problems such as those concerning teaching materials.

3. Improved working conditions for literacy service providers (noting that 50 percent of these are volunteers.)

4. Official recognition of literacy and a wider concept of literacy.

5. Mother-tongue literacy for immigrants.

6. Free literacy programs for all, including "illegal" refugees.

7. Wider use of computers.

8. Establishment of an organization for the so-called illiterate, an advocacy committee, and a multicultural learners' group.

9. The need for reflexion on the status of the adult learner within the literacy group, and of the status of those who are illiterate but not yet involved in the literacy process, from an adult-education perspective.

10. Launching of a provincial awareness campaign on the problem of illiteracy in Quebec.

The urgent need for quality services for the growing population of those Quebeckers termed illiterate can no longer be ignored. Should literacy continue to be a priority of the ministry of Education and of our affluent society, then special consideration must be given to the needs of the people concerned - those who are not literate and the practitioners entrusted with this essential educational and social responsibility.

HÉLENE BLAIS was provincial coordinator of the Quebec study of literacy programs and materials and a member of the research group on curriculum evaluation at the University of Quebec at Montreal. This article is an excerpt from the report on her investigation.

NEW RESOURCES

AUDIOVISUAL

JOURNEYWORKERS

Calgary : ACCESS NETWORK, the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation
$250.00 (discounts for volume orders)
English

"Journeyworkers" is a multi-media resource package for adult literacy tutor education. The package consists of five video programs (available in VHS, Beta and 3/4 inch formats), a tutor's handbook and a workshop leader's guide. The series can be used with a resource person, for individual or distance study, or broadcast with in-studio discussion. Broadcast rights can be purchased separately.

The "Journeyworkers" resource package is available from Program Sales, ACCESS NETWORK, 295 Midpark Way S.E., Calgary (Alberta) T2X 2A8, telephone (403) 256-1100, telex 03-824867.

BOOKS

ALPHA 88

1988: Ministère de l'Éducation du Quebec
427 pages
Free on request, limited supply
French

This is the lastest issue in the Alpha collection published since 1978. It is composed of a collection of reports on practical and theoretical research in the field of literacy carried out in French-speaking countries. **Alpha 88** is published by the ministry of education of Québec under the direction of Jean-Paul Hautecoeur. The book is already in its second printing and is to be available at the end of January 1989 from Madame Diane Labrosse, Direction des formations extrascolaires, Ministère de l'Éducation, 600, rue Fullum, 4e étage, Montréal (Québec) H2K 4L1, telephone (514) 873-3241.

COLLECTION TOURNEPAGE

Marie-Carmelle, by Florence du Crest
Le Roméo du Metro, by Claire Saint-Onge;
Fidèle Compagnon, by Serge Rondeau;
Le voyage de Solonia, by Danielle Dolduc, and
Lenoir et le mystère du lait, by Sylvie Bissonnette

1988: Collection Tournepage
$6.00 single volume plus 70¢ or $15.00 for three volumes plus $2.10 postage
French

These pocket books are the product of a writing contest for new writers. Printed in easy-to-read type, their content makes them useful as in reading instruction. Available from Collection Tournepage, 1050, Côte Vertu, St-Laurent, Québec H4L 1Y4

STORIES FROM THE LAKELAND

The LEARN Literacy Program

$2.95 per copy
($2.50 per copy on orders of 6 or more)
plus 70¢ postage and handling
English

This is a collection of historical recollections about the people and communities of north-eastern Alberta. All the entries were written or compiled by LEARN staff or long-time community members. Written in clear, simple English, the book is suitable for literacy or ESL learners.

Order from LEARN Coordinator, Lakeland College, Box 1469, Cold Lake (Alberta) T0A 0V8, telephone (403) 639-3939

CARIBBEAN LANGUAGES:
A Language Study Kit

Carib-Can Publishers
$38.00
English

Caribbean Languages is a kit which will prove invaluable to teachers of adolescent and adult students from the English-speaking Caribbean, who speak a Creole language. It is designed to aid those who operate at an inter-language stage, between Creole and Standard English.

The kit contains information about the language and origins of the people of the Caribbean and is designed to draw parallels between Creole and Standard English, in order that the student can acquire a sense of self-worth. It provides reading skills and activities which develop and practise specific language reading skills and opportunities for small group and reseach tasks. The entire kit can be photocopied and is thus suitable for any class size.

Available from Carib-Can Publishers, 20 College Street, Suite #11, Toronto (Ontario) M5G 1K2 or telephone Nicholas Austin at (416) 323-0069.

ACTION ON HEALTH BARRIERS:
Health Promotion with Low Income Women
Jane Bremner, Noreen Crawford, Neth Mairs, Elaine Minsky

$20.00 for organizations
$10.00 for individuals
plus $2.00 shipping and handling per copy English

This manual describes barriers that prevent low-income women from taking effective action on their health concerns. It provides ideas for meeting some of these challenges in a group setting. The manual gives a session-by-session plan of a group program that has been developed by and offered to low income women.

To order, send cheque payable to "O.F.A. Action on Health Barriers" to O.F.A., 801 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto (Ontario) M5N 1E3, telephone (416) 787-1481.

ADULT LITERACY PERSPECTIVES
Maurice Taylor and James Draper, editors

1989: Culture Concepts Inc.
$21.50 plus $2 postage and handling
English

This book includes contributors from Canada, USA, United Kingdom, as well as from UNESCO.

Available August 15, 1989. Order now from Culture Concepts Inc., 5 Darlingbrook Crescent, Toronto (Ontario) M9A 3H4.

THE CRAFT OF TEACHING ADULTS
Thelma Barer-Stein & James A. Draper, editors

1988: Culture Concepts Inc.
207 pages, paperback
$17.95 Canadian or $13.50 US outside Canada
(plus $2.00 handling for mail order)
English

This book offers distillations of practical experience and theoretical wisdoms by eight well-known adult educators, among them Alan M. Thomas, Roby Kidd, Reg Herman, Donald Brundage, Lynn E. Davie and Virginia Griffin. It includes a selected annotated Canadian bibliography and information on The Adult Education Network. A "Practitioner's Summary" precedes each chapter and there are special boxed sections for emphasis, and author's references.

According to the publishers, "The Craft of Teaching Adults" speaks directly to the new practitioner working with adults in a variety of disciplines and provides long-time practitioners with new insights.

Available exclusively from Culture Concepts Inc., 5 Darlingbrook Crescent, Toronto (Ontario) M9A 3H4, telephone (416) 231-1692.

NATIONAL LITERACY DIRECTORY

1988: Laubach Literacy of Canada
$25.00 (20% discount for literacy councils)
In English and French

The National Literacy Directory is available in both French and English. It can be purchased through Laubach Literacy of Canada, Head Office, P.O. Box 6548, Station "A",. Saint John (New Brunswick) E2L 4R9, telephone (506) 642-4357.

JOURNALS AND REPRINTS

Community-Based Training for Women : Why We Should Care
Position Paper on the Impact and Implementation of the Canadian Jobs Strategy

Toronto : Advocates for Community-Based Training and Education for Women (ACTEW)
$3.00 per copy
English

Copies are available from ACTEW, 801 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 301, Toronto (Ontario) M5N 1E3, telephone (416) 783-3590.

Prison Literacy: Prison Journal No. 7
$4.00 per copy
Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University
English

Copies of issue no. 7 of Prison Journal on Prison Literacy are available from Maureen Nicholson, Managing Editor, Prison Journal, Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby (British Columbia) V5A 1S6.

Voices: New Writers for New Readers

Lower Mainland Society for Literacy and Employment,
110A Avenue, Surrey (British Columbia) V3R 2B4
Editor: Lee Weinstein
Quarterly, $12.00 per year, 10 or more subscriptions $10.00 each, 100 or more $9.00 each
English

This quarterly magazine has the goal of providing reading material for new adult readers and providing assistance for tutors involved with reading and writing instruction.

Women and Literacy: Fall/Winter 1988

Fall/Winter 1988 double issue
Canadian Woman Studies/Les cahiers de la femme
212 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview (Ontario) M3J 1P3
Telephone (416) 736-5356
$10.00 per copy (10% discount on orders of 20 or more)
Add $1.00 Canada, $2.00 abroad postage per copy
English and French

In this special issue of feminist explorations of literacy, contributors include practitioners, learners and academics who voice their reflections in essays, interviews, book and film reviews, fiction, poetry, artwork and music.

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION :
The Community College in its Community
May 28, 1989, Regina (Saskatchewan)

This workshop will feature a presentation of the 'Partnerships in Literacy" project undertaken by Fanshawe College and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. The workshop will centre on a resource manual of ways in which colleges wok in partnership with community-based organizations. For more information, contact Micheline Reid, ACCC, 110 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto (Ontario) M4R 1A3, (416) 489-5925.

BOOKS, continued

OUR SCHOOLS/OUR SELVES

The School of Education, Dalhousie University,
Halifax (Nova Scotia)
$28.00 per year ($24.00 for students, seniors and unemployed)
English only

This new series, directed at Canadian education activists, consists of four magazines and four books a year, covering a broad range of education concerns discussed from a progressive point of view and in a clear, down-to-earth style. The first issue (October 1988) explores the politics of the curriculum, day care, class/race/gender relations, community and union education, labelling and streaming, funding and control, adult literacy, anti-racist schooling, women's studies, children's TV, native education and the responses of teacher, students and parents to these and other issues.

Series available from: Our Schools/Our Selves, 1698 Gerrard Street, Toronto (Ontario) M4L 2B2. For more information or with suggestions for articles with a regional focus, contact Ruth Gamberg or Ann Manicom, School of Education, Dalhousie University, Halifax (Nova Scotia) B3G 3H5.

CONFERENCES

"LIGHTING THE WAY"

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada's Seventh National Conference will be held in St. John's (Newfoundland) October 19, 20 and 21, 1989.

This will be a multi-disciplinary conference on learning disabilities for educators, parents, physicians, social workers and others interested in the field. For more information, contact Judy Davis, Conference Coordinator, 12 Colville Steet, St. John's (Newfoundland) A1E 3J8, (709) 739-0611 or 579-7273.

"SHARING THE VISION"
November 16-18, 1989

The 1989 conference of the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy will be held in Grande Prairie, November 16-18. It will include sessions for tutors, practitioners and learners. Topics include: International Literacy Year 1990, the learner's voice, a northern perspective on literacy, English as a second language, using computers, and fund-raising on a shoestring.

Pre-registration is required. To receive a registration package, write to Angie Dixon, registration chairperson, AAAL Conference 1989, 10237 - 112 Avenue, Grande Prairie (Alberta) T8V 1V9.

1990 ADULT BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Buffalo, New York, will be the site of a conference sponsored by the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) in 1990. Roger Clark of 389 Craigleigh Drive, Waterloo (Ontario) N2L 5B5, telephone (519) 742-2851, would like to hear from interested participants.

ALPHABÉTISATION LITERACY

MOVEMENT FOR CANADIAN LITERACY • RASSEMBLEMENT CANADIEN POUR L'ALPHABÉTISATION

PRINTEMPS 1989

VOLUME 13, No 2

LITERACY/
ALPHABÉTISATION

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Joan Mansfield

LITERACY/ALPHABÉTISATION est la revue du Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation, la corporation à but non-lucratif qui rassemble les individus, les groupes et les organisations dans le domaine de la promotion des apprentissages de base et de l'alphabétisation au Canada.

L'adhésion au RCA et l'abonnement à cette revue sont disponibles au Rassemblement canadien de l'alphabétisation, 9 St. Joseph Street, Toronto (Ontario) M4T 1J6, téléphone (416) 925-3554.

Les politiques et les opinions exprimées dans cette revue sont celles des auteurs et ne reflètent pas nécessairement la politique des membres du Rassemblement canadien de l'alphabétisation.

L'autorisation de reproduire les articles dans cette revue est accordée, à condition que la source et l'auteur soient clairement indiquées.

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ALPHABÉTISATION LITERACY

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Volume 13, Numéro 2, printemps 1989

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ÉDITORIAL

Alors que nous apportions les touches finales à ce numéro, le RCA apprenait que sa subvention de Secrétariat d'État était moins assurée que nous aurions aimé le croire. Le Secrétariat d'État est en train de réduire les fonds disponibles pour les subventions aux coûts d'opération des groupes nationaux.

Au cours des dernières années, le RCA a pris de l'expansion. Alors qu'il s'agissait d'un groupe sans budget, les seules personnes qui pouvaient s'y impliquer étaient des employés gouvernementaux que l'employeur pouvait envoyer aux réunions. Certaines de ces personnes étaient en contact avec des adultes qui apprenaient à lire et à écrire, mais d'autres pas. Aucun adulte apprenant à lire et à écrire n'était impliqué.

L'un des projets sur lesquels le RCA travaille en ce moment, est un Comité des apprenants; ceci rapprocherait les apprenants entre eux pour leur apprendre comment partir des groupes d'apprenants partout à travers le pays. Il y a deux représentants des apprenants au sein du conseil d'administration du RCA. Le RCA tente aussi d'organiser les fêtes de l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation en 1990. Nous voulons nous assurer que cette revue puisse paraître plus souvent afin que le personnel en alphabétisation à travers le pays puisse savoir ce qui se passe ailleurs et qu'ils et elles puissent toujours apprendre l'un de l'autre.

Nous aimerions effectuer un projet de recherche visant à savoir - de la part d'apprenants adultes - en quoi consiste un bon programme d'alphabétisation. Nous aimerions aussi établir un moyen afin que les gens puissent s'informer sur les livres et les programmes dans toutes les régions du pays. Dans la présente édition de notre revue, nous décrivons ce projet plus en détail.

Toutefois, si nous n'avons pas d'argent pour un bureau et le personnel, comment pouvons-nous mener l'un ou l'autre de ces projets à bien? Les programmes d'alphabétisation seront-ils les prochains en liste? Nous savons aussi que le RCA n'est pas le seul groupe se trouvant dans cette situation.

NOUS AVONS BESOINS DE VOTRE AIDE! Peut-être il nous faudra demander votre aide à mettre en train ces projets. Vous pourriez également écrire au Secretaire d'État Jerry Wiener, pour lui faire savoir l'importance d'une organisation nationale pour l'alphabétisation. Pourtant, malgré les problèmes qu'on subit actuellement, il nous faut encore plus travailler ensemble afin d'effectuer des changements réels dans le domaine de l'alphabétisation.

Renseignez-vous chez votre organisation provinciale d'alphabétisation!

Merci de votre appui,

Tannis Atkinson, Comité des publications

MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT Robin Stonehouse 1987-1988

Depuis notre Séminaire national sur l'alphabétisation en octobre 1987, le Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation a grandi à une vitesse phénoménale. Nous sommes passés d'une organisation complètement bénévole et financée exclusivement par les cotisations de membres et la vente de macarons et d'affiches, à un organisme subventionné par le secrétariat d'État et recevant des dons d'un certain nombre de ministères et d'entreprises.

Grâce à notre nouveau statu d'organisme prêt à répondre aux demandes de renseignements, le nombre de nos membres continue de grandir et notre revue gagne en popularité en tant que source d'information sur l'alphabétisation au Canada.

Un des objectifs majeurs du RCA a été et restera d'établir des relations de partenaires entres les groupes nationaux voués favoriser la cause de l'alphabétisation. C'est à la Coalition nationale d'alphabétisation, présidée par le RCA. que nous devons la Déclaration de Cedar Glen et une Lettre ouverte au Premier Ministre qui a été publiée dans Maclean's Magazine et le Globe & Mail. En février 1988, la Coalition nationale d'alphabétisation a choisi de devenir un sous-comité du Comité de politiques de RCA. La Coalition, qui regroupe douze organisations nationales, a adopté le nouveau nom de Comité des organisations nationales.

Le Comité des organisations nationales exerce des pressions dans le but d'obtenir un soutien pour les programmes d'alphabétisation et se consacre à la sensibilisation et l'éducation du public.

Le Comité de politiques s'est mis à la tâche pour élaborer une politique nationale d'alphabétisation au Canada. Cela pourrait être accompli par le biais de consultations, de recherche et d'écrits, et par l'évaluation des politiques actuelles. Le Comité de politiques informe et travaille avec le Comité des organisations nationales.

Le Rassemblement relève maintenant un nouveau défi, il s'agit de la coordination et de la promotion de l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation qui sera en 1990. Le Rassemblement fait partie, avec d'autres organismes canadiens, du Groupe de travail international pour l'Année internationale. Le Conseil d'administration du RCA a l'intention d'établir un Comité canadien d'organisation de l'Année internationale d'alphabétisation pour coordonner les activités au Canada et publier un bulletin de nouvelles afin de disséminer l'information. Le Conseil désire poser les bases qui assureront l'accroissement de l'activité en alphabétisation et une plus grande sensibilisation du public tout au long des années 1990.

RICHARD DARVILLE (à gauche) et LOUISE MILLAR (à droite) participent aux premières élections bilingues du RCA à l'assemblée générale annuelle, octobre 1988.

Photo: Roger Davies

ROSE DOIRON (à gauche) et SALLY McBETH acceptent le Prix national de l'alphabétisation 1988 que leur a décerné le RCA pour le livre de Rose, MY NAME IS ROSE, publié par East End Literacy Press, Toronto.

Photo: Roger Davies

Le Comité des conférences d'apprenants a entrepris la planification d'un stage de formation pour les apprenants qui aura lieu à l'automne 1989. Un petit groupe d'apprenants viendrait de chaque province pour apprendre à organiser les activités par et pour les apprenants. Ce comité envisage que le groupe de stagiaires développera un grand nombre d'activités spéciales et de conférences d'apprenants à travers le Canada pendant les années 1990.

Le Conseil du Rassemblement rêve toujours d'établir un réseau national de bureaux d'information et de référence. Ce réseau ne pourra être établie qu'après une étude qui en aura confirmé la possibilité. Un comité consultatif a été nommé pour assister au développement de ce projet.

Le Comité des publications a recommandé que la revue LITERACY/ALPHABÉTISATION se dirige vers une nouvelle étape de sa croissance. La revue a été publiée une fois l'an dernier. Pour la consolider, il faudra la placer sur une base financière plus stable avec plus de soutien de la part du personnel. Les articles seront imprimés en anglais et en français pour assurer son caractère véritablement national.

Le Comité du développement organisationnel est un de nos comités essentiels. Les statuts et les réglements ont été rédigés il y a une dizaine d'années. C'est un de nos mérites de les avoir dépassés. Les modifications qui vont être apportées permettront à notre organisme de grandir de façon ordonnée.

Nous avons sans aucun doute fait bon usage des services et du soutien de nos Comité exécutif et Comité de finances. L'attention soigneuse aux détails, la capacité d'innover et d'apprendre au fur et à mesure ont permis aux membres de ces comités de garder le pas avec les changements inévitables qu'entraîne une croissance rapide.

Pour ma part, l'année a été très bonne. Je pensais attendre deux ans avant d'accéder à la présidence, mais lorsque Marianne Williams a donné sa démission pour assumer les fonctions de coordinatrice nationale, j'ai été élu président en mai 1988. J'ai eu l'occasion d'apprendre beaucoup pendant ce temps. J'ai heureusement une très bonne équipe pour me seconder. Le RCA a un conseil fort et dévoué, composé de vingt-cinq membres venant de toutes les régions du Canada. L'exécutif apporte une grande expérience et un sincère engagement à notre organisme. Si on y ajoute notre personnel compétent et diligent, vous pouvez comprendre comment nous avons réussi à grandir rapidement. Je me sens prêt pour l'année à venir et je sais que tous ensemble, le Conseil d'administration, les membres et tous nos amis, nous allons continuer de voir l'avancement de l'alphabétisation au Canada.

GLADYS NEALE, Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation, reçoit le Prix national 1988 du RCA. Photo: Roger Davies

COMITÉ DES APPRENANTS

Roger Davies (N.-E.), président
Robin Silverman (Ontario)
Agnes Barnes (N.-E.)
Bram Fisher (Ontario)
Joe Binger (Yukon)
David Speakman (T.N.-O.)

Le comité s'est efforcé d'établir des contacts entre les apprenants de tout le Canada. Nous espérons avancer la cause des apprenants pendant le reste de l'année et en 1990, l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation.

Nous avons proposé la tenue, en automne 1989, d'un atelier national de formation à l'intention des apprenants. Au moins quatre apprenants de chaque province ou territoire ainsi qu'une responsable du programme y prendraient part. L'objet de cet atelier de trois jours serait de former les apprenants pour qu'ils puissent rentrer dans leur province ou territoire et organiser un mouvement d'apprenants.

Les premières mesures pour réaliser l'atelier de formation ont déjà étaient prises. En mars, des apprenants venant de toutes les régions du pays ont été réunis pour une rencontre de deux jours à Toronto. Ce groupe est maintenant le comité d'organisation de l'atelier national de formation des apprenants.

Nous nous rendons compte de l'importance d'avoir une réunion de suivi avec les mêmes personnes vers la fin de 1990, pour partager les expériences, s'informer mutuellement sur les méthodes d'organisation et pour trouver d'autres moyens d'encourager les apprenants à faire connaître eux-mêmes leurs besoins.

Nous espérons qu'une gamme d'activités seront organisées dans les provinces et territoires tout au long de l'année 1990, et nous sommes convaincus que les apprenants prendront une part importante dans la planification, la promotion et la réalisation de ces activités. Nous souhaitons que ces activités soient des occasions de célébration tout autant que de développement.

Dans toutes ces activités, il est nécessaire que les intervenants en alphabétisation apportent leur soutien aux efforts des apprenants. Pour que ce projet soit un succès, les apprenants doivent être encouragés et appuyés.

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COMITÉ DES POLITIQUES

Susan Hoddinott (présidente)
Richard Darville
Janet Longmate
Isabel Madeira-Voss
(ancienne présidente et membre de comité)
Robin Stonehouse
(de temps à autre)
Cathy Wright

Le comité des politiques du Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation a tenu des réunions depuis environ un an et demi. Après quelques difficultés initiales à définir la signification exacte du terme "politiques", nous avons décidé de concentrer nos efforts à déterminer quelles politiques gouvernementales ayant trait à l'alphabétisation et quel genre de programmes d'alphabétisation le RCA devra revendiquer.

Il a fallu aussi réfléchir sur la meilleure façon d'accomplir cela. Nous avons pensé qu'évidemment il ne suffisait pas que quelques personnes se réunissent et prennent des décisions concernant les politiques ayant trait à l'alphabétisation. Il fallait donc commencer par recruter plus de personnes pour que nous puissions entreprendre des projets qui aideraient le mouvement d'alphabétisation à établir un ordre du jour commun pour les politiques.

La première étape est de préparer une petite publication, Learners Speak Out, constituée de déclarations faites par des apprenants et à leur intention. Avec l'assistance du comité des apprenants, nous avons recueilli des rapports de conférences et d'activités d'apprenants qui ont eu lieu dans toutes les régions du pays. Nous avons engagé un écrivain pour étudier ces rapports et pour en extraire les remarques des apprenants au sujet de

- leurs expériences scolaires passées
- les programmes pour adultes et ce dont ont besoin les apprenants pour qu'ils soient efficaces
- quoi dire aux gouvernements.

(Par gouvernements, nous entendons non seulement les politiciens et les fonctionnaires du gouvernement fédéral et des autorités provinciales, mais également les organisations communautaires et les programmes d'alphabétisation eux-mêmes.)

Le petit livre est composé en partie de déclarations générales au sujet des programmes et en partie de déclarations comme celles qu'ont fait les apprenants lors des conférences et dans le cadre des programmes. Son intention est d'encourager la discussion entre les apprenants, lors de conférences ultérieures ainsi que pendant les cours, avec les intervenants ou avec qui que ce soit. Nous espérons aussi qu'il sera lu et pris au sérieux par les dirigeants communautaires et les politiciens qui ont une certaine influence dans les prises de décisions. Le petit livre paraîtra prochainement.

L'autre projet du comité des politiques est de rédiger un document de discussion sur la pratique de l'alphabétisation (Good Practice in Adult Literacy Education). La "bonne pratique" dont il s'agit comprend des aspects comme l'accessibilité des programmes, les niveaux de financement de l'alphabétisation, les conditions de travail dans les programmes et la formation des instructeurs et des enseignants. Pour produire ce document nous allons faire deux choses. La première sera d'examiner les directives actuelles et les déclarations concernant la pratique développée au Canada et à l'échelle internationale, puis, ensuite, avec

COMITÉ DES PUBLICATIONS

Tannis Atkinson (Ontario), présidente
Richard Darville (C.-B.)
Louise Dagenais (Québec)
Mary Norton (Alberta)

Lorsque le Comité des publications s'est rencontré à Ottawa au mois de février, un de nos principaux objectifs était de préparer une proposition pour engager, en tant que membre du personnel du RCA, un responsable des publications. A la fin de la réunion, nous avions établi une description d'emploi, les justifications pour créer un poste de "coordinateur/trice des communications", ainsi qu'un plan annuel de publication. Voici nos conclusions :

Pour commencer, nous nous sommes posés la question "Pourquoi Literacy/Alphabétisation est-elle une publication importante?" (Bien que la revue ne soit pas la seule publication du RCA, c'est sur elle que nous avons concentré nos efforts depuis un certain temps.) Voici quelques unes de nos réponses :

"La revue est essentielle au RCA. C'est l'activité la plus visible du RCA..."

"Elle permet aux gens de savoir ce que font les autres dans le reste du pays... elle offre l'occasion à nos membres d'apprendre les uns des autres."

"C'est une tribune pour la discussion des questions importantes..."

"C'est une source d'information sur l'enseignement..."

"C'est un moyen d'informer les membres des activités du RCA..."

C'est à l'aide de ces réponses que nous avons défini les raisons pour lesquelles nous devions publier la revue, et même d'autres publications. Nos réponses ont également rendu évidente la nécessité d'engager un membre du personnel.

Le "besoin de savoir" est à la base de nos réponses. Le RCA doit communiquer avec ses membres pour les aider à savoir, à rester informés des questions importantes et des développements et pour les encourager à participer. C'est aussi à ces fins que nous avons proposé d'engager un-e coordinateur/trice des communications. Cette personne devra rester informée des développements dans le domaine de l'alphabétisation et coordonner les communications avec et entre les membres du RCA.

(Comité des politiques, suite)
l'aide d'un comité consultatif, préparer une ébauche du document.

Cette ébauche sera la base de consultations et d'entrevues avec des alphabétiseurs et des organisateurs dans tout le pays, avec des apprenants à l'occasion de conférences d'apprenants régionales et provinciales, et enfin lors d'une conférence des intervenants qui sera organisée pendant l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation. Cette responsabilité du RCA constituera d'une part un processus éducatif, recueillir et disséminer des idées, et un processus de consultation en mettant ces idées à l'épreuve auprès des intervenants et des apprenants. Ce document devrait être distribué à la fin de l'année 1990.

Nous espérons que ces deux projets renforceront la capacité des intervenants en alphabétisation à donner forme au développement de leur travail.

L'ANNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE L'ALPHABÉTISATION

Joyce Whyte (Ontario), présidente
Agnes Barnes (N.-E.)
Ann Gauvin (Québec)
Alan Mackenzie (I.P.-E.)
Isabel Madeira-Voss (Ontario)

Le Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation est prêt à assumer la promotion et l'animation des activités d'alphabétisation de l'AIA en 1990. Nous espérons que les activités auront pour résultat l'établissement d'un mécanisme durable pour le soutien de l'alphabétisation au Canada.

Notre plan d'action comprend un grand choix d'activités classées dans les quatre catégories suivantes :

* sensibilisation du public
* création et renforcement des structures d'alphabétisation
* encouragement d'un "Grand Débat" sur l'alphabétisation
* encouragement de la recherche et de l'évaluation

Sensibilisation du public

1) Produire et distribuer des affiches, des brochures, des broches portant le logo de l'AIA, pour promouvoir l'Année.

2) Assembler une trousse d'information identifiant les projets actuels ou éventuels pour les organisations locales, provinciales et nationales.

3) Publier un bulletin bi-mensuel pour faire circuler dans tout le pays l'information concernant les activités de l'AIA et les mesures et politiques provinciales et nationales.

4) Organiser des ateliers sur l'alphabétisation pour les journalistes.

5) Trouver le média qui contribuera à la production des clips de télévision intitulés "Moments pour l'alphabétisation", qui passeront aux heures de grande écoute des profils d'apprenants et d'intervenants.

6) Parrainer un concours d'affiches qui soient un message visuel pour annoncer l'AIA au public.

7) Participer au "Voyage du Livre". Les participants aux programmes d'alphabétisation du monde entier seront encouragés à écrire un livre spécial pour l'AIA. Il s'agit d'un projet participatoire d'une valeur symbolique, dans le même esprit que la Torche olympique. Le livre contiendrait des déclarations d'apprenants expliquant comment leur vie a changé depuis qu'ils ont appris à lire et écrire, des remarques de personnalités politiques ou de personnes célèbres sur l'importance de l'alphabétisation, etc.

Création et renforcement des structures d'alphabétisation

1) L'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation est une célébration de tous ceux qui prennent part à l'alphabétisation : les apprenants, les intervenants, les administrateurs, les défenseurs, les travailleurs de la base, etc. Nous voulons tout particulièrement soutenir les apprenants adultes et nous joindre à eux dans la revendication de leurs droits en tant qu'apprenants et en tant que citoyens. Nous appuyons donc l'établissement de réseaux locaux d'apprenants, tout comme la représentation des apprenants aux réunions nationales.

2) Un/e représentant/e des apprenants accompagnera un membre du conseil d'administration du RCA aux réunions du Groupe d'action international sur l'alphabétisation pour assurer que les apprenants contribuent et participent activement à tous les plans pour l'AIA.

Encouragement d'un "Grand Débat" sur l'alphabétisation

Le RCA voudrait stimuler un processus menant à la création d'une structure canadienne appropriée pour l'AIA assurant que toutes les ONG soient informées des activités de promotion et qu'elles y participent. Les objectifs de la Coalition canadienne pour l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation seront d'encourager les échanges entre ses membres, de les motiver et de leur permettre d'agir ensemble dans la mesure du possible. Les résultats souhaités étant le partage de l'information, l'entraide et le soutien mutuel, l'identification d'activités communes ainsi que l'établissement de priorités d'action politique.

Encouragement de la recherche et de l'évaluation

1) Le RCA travaille avec UNISYS Canada pour établir un réseau de contacts électroniques dans tout le pays. Ce moyen de rencontre électronique pourrait devenir un lieu de rencontre pour les universitaires, les alphabétiseurs et les apprenants leur permettant de discuter les questions importantes et facilitant les communications au sujet de l'alphabétisation à travers le Canada. L'installation de ce service permettrait aux centres ayant un ordinateur (PC) n'importe où au Canada de rester en contact moyennant de modestes frais de téléphone.

2) Conférence nationale sur l'alphabétisation : Notre comité de l'AIA-1990 va organiser, en collaboration avec le comité des politiques du RCA, une Conférence nationale sur l'alphabétisation pour examiner les conclusions de son projet de recherche

3) Institut d'été de l'alphabétisation des adultes pour les intervenants : L'Université Carleton a demandé au RCA de co-parrainer son programme d'été de formation des alphabétiseurs. Des premiers pourparlers ont été entamés.

COMITÉ LEARN

Carol Sears (N.-B., présidente)
Ann Gauvin (Québec)
Teresa Campbell (C.-B.)

Le projet LEARN (Réseau de ressources) a vu le jour car le Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation a détecté le besoin d'établir un centre national de ressources qui soit indépendant pour fournir des renseignements sur la disponibilité des ressources d'alphabétisation à toutes les personnes intéressées par ce domaine : les apprenants, les intervenants, les groupes et les organisations.

Le comité LEARN reconnaît que les gouvernements, les entreprises, les agences de financement, le secteur bénévole et les systèmes scolaires ont tous besoin d'informations.

Parmi les raisons pour lesquelles il serait important d'établir un réseau de ressources d'alphabétisation, mentionnons :

- les intervenants en alphabétisation, les apprenants, les administrateurs et toutes les personnes concernées doivent être informés des ressources disponibles en plus de celles qui existent dans leur région immédiate;

COMITÉ LEARN, suite

- les régions où existe la tradition d'un programme unique doivent être avisées des autres possibilités et de l'efficacité de divers programmes;

- étant donné la mobilité de la population, les apprenants, en particulier, doivent pouvoir avoir accès à des programmes quand ils viennent s'installer dans une nouvelle région.

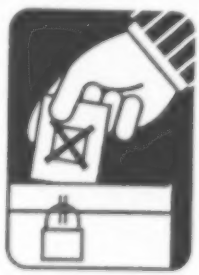
Ce comité est à la recherche de nouveaux membres qui soient intéressés à établir un réseau de ressources fonctionnel et accessible pour la communauté de l'alphabétisation.

EN BREF

LE SCRUTIN AND L'ALPHABÉTISATION

Une étude menée par l'Organisation nationale anti-pauvreté sur l'accès des électeurs analphabètes aux procédures de vote a révélé également des problèmes d'accès pour d'autres groupes sociaux. L'ONAP a communiqué ses préoccupations au directeur général des élections et a eu une réunion avec lui et plusieurs membres de son personnel. Il est prévu de donner suite à cette question dans les prochains mois.

Quant à l'alphabétisation, l'ONAP a recommandé qu'une campagne d'information soit entreprise à l'intention des analphabètes; que des fonds et du matériel soient fournis aux groupes d'alphabétisation pour qu'ils puissent aider les apprenants à suivre facilement le processus de vote; et que les logos et couleurs des partis politiques soient imprimés sur les bulletins de vote. Élections Canada n'a pas pu tenir compte de ces recommandations avant les dernières élections, bien qu'une trousse d'information pour les apprenants avait été offerte aux groupes d'alphabétisation.



Un député avait fait des recommandations semblables concernant les bulletins de vote au gouvernement de l'Ontario. La photo des candidats est utilisée sur les bulletins de vote dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest. La Loi sur les élections autorise les électeurs qui ne savent pas lire à demander à un parent ou un ami du scrutateur de marquer pour eux leur bulletin de vote. Toutefois, ils doivent prêter serment qu'ils ne sont pas capables de voter et expliquer pourquoi.

Le rapport sur l'alphabétisation de Southam a indiqué que les analphabètes de base (ceux qui peuvent à peine lire et écrire) ont moins tendance à voter que les personnes ayant plus de compétences. Des efforts pour rendre plus accessible le processus de vote aux analphabètes de base pourraient permettre à un plus grand nombre d'électeurs de voter.

L'ONAP vous invite à soumettre des suggestions à ce sujet. Elle contactera le directeur général des élections avant qu'il présente son rapport à la prochaine session du nouveau parlement.

L'ANALYSE DES BESOINS : CAUCHEMAR OU INSTRUMENT?

Pierrette Lavoie-Ste-Marie

Au moment de me pencher sur la question de l'analyse des besoins comme outil d'intervention, je me remémore deux vieux principes qui m'ont souvent amenée à me questionner sur la pertinence de mes démarches en formation sur mesure.

Le premier principe est tiré d'un texte de Bercovitz (1) et se formule comme suit : "Comment puis-je dire ce que je veux apprendre puisque je ne le sais pas?" ou encore "puisque je ne sais pas que je ne sais pas?" Cette première affirmation se confirme dans la réalité. C'est souvent à mesure des apprentissages que l'apprenant apprend qu'il ne savait pas. Comment aurait-il pu le dire auparavant?

BESOINS OU PROBLEMES?

Le deuxième principe qui me "hante" la conscience se définit à peu près de cette façon : dans un processus de formation il faut partir, non des besoins mais des problèmes des apprenants. Mais B. Charlot (2) affirme : "Le formé répugnera davantage encore à exposer ses difficultés devant un formateur et un groupe d'inconnus, qu'à se torturer pour s'inventer des besoins."

Si je me tourne à nouveau vers le concepte de besoin, je me place devant une autre affirmation de Charlot : "Les formés arrivent généralement avec des attentes très vagues. Exiger d'eux qu'ils expriment clairement leurs besoins, ce n'est pas les engager dans un processus d'auto-formation, mais leur faire immédiatement sentir leur infériorité vis-à-vis du formateur."

Là, on ne s'en sort pas! Qu'il était doux le temps où j'étais l'expert, le maître à bord d'un programme entièrement concocté par le ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ). Je pouvais dire aux étudiants ce qui était bon pour eux! Mais en même temps, comment refuser ce qui est évident : on apprend véritablement quand on s'implique. De plus, les adultes ont un vécu, une expérience de vie qu'on ne peut laisser de côté quand on intervient auprès d'eux. Je me ré-attèle donc à une recherche de solutions.

Comment alors faire de la formation "sur mesure" afin d'instrumenter l'étudiant, c'est-à-dire lui permettre d'acquérir à la fois les connaissances et les habiletés qu'il pourra appliquer dans des situations de vie?

J'envisage l'analyse des besoins reliée à l'apprentissage comme un acte pédagogique et comme un processus qui déboucherait sur une habileté de l'étudiant et de l'étudiante à s'utiliser de façon consciente dans la recherche de ses propres besoins. Cet acte pédagogique doit donc être composé de différentes étapes, chacune permettant d'être plus en mesure d'accéder à la suivante.

PROBLEMES OU INTERETS?

On pourrait au départ considérer d'intervenir sur le plan des intérêts: 27M "J'aimerais faire ... j'aimerais savoir ... si je savais ça, je pourrais ... je connais quelqu'un qui peut ... pourquoi cela marche comme cela ou ..."

Après quelques courtes expériences "couronnées de succès," on pourrait commencer par identifier

ce qui est considéré comme un manque : Je ne peux pas ... je ne sais pas ... la raison pour laquelle je ne fais pas ... c'est parce que je ..." Mais attention à la remarque de B. Charlot : il ne faudrait pas que les étudiants puissent se sentir diminués par cette forme d'expression. Cette formule sera donc utilisée lorsque le groupe s'apprivoise, quand les membres de ce groupe ont eu l'occasion d'affirmer des aspects positifs d'eux mêmes et qu'une volonté d'entraide s'installe.

Mais que dire des vrais besoins, ceux qui empêchent l'individu de s'actualiser en tant que personne et de prendre sa place dans son environnement? N'est-ce pas ceux-là qu'il faut travailler si l'on envisage l'autonomie comme objectif de formation? Continuons; peut--être trouverons-nous réponse à mesure de notre réflexion.

En résumé : faire place à l'analyse de besoins dans une préoccupation de formation, c'est mettre en place un processus qui va se modifier et évoluer à mesure de l'acquisition d'une série d'habiletés à pouvoir s'utiliser de façon satisfaisante dans ce processus. Vue dans ce sens, l'analyse de besoins est un acte pédagogique.

L'EXEMPLE DE GEORGES

Un exemple peut permettre de voir comment ce processus se traduit en action. Georges, étudiant en alpha, s'exprime peu sur lui-même, que ce soit en groupe ou dans ses rencontres individuelles. Il finit cependant par dire un soit qu'il n'a jamais une bonne job. "Les papiers de demande d'emploi, c'est complètement tordu." La formatrice lui propose alors : si, pendant nos exercices de français, on en regardait une demande d'emploi. Il y a peut-être d'autres personnes qui seraient intéressées à regarder cet aspect."

La formatrice continue d'explorer les intérêts des participants reliés au monde du travail. A la suite de cette exploration, il se peut qu'il y ait ralliement; il se peut également que l'intérêt collectif n'y soit pas. Ce qui ne veut pas dire que, à un autre moment donné, l'expression pour ce thème ne puisse se manifester.

Si le ralliement se fait, Georges aura l'occasion de travailler sur la demande d'emploi. Cependant le formatrice, qui connaît Georges, sait fort bien qu'il a des problèmes de comportement : il ne peut supporter l'autorité. Mais ça changerait quoi, à ce stade-ci, de lui dire qu'il aura toujours des problèmes avec ses patrons tant qu'il ne modifiera pas certaines attitudes? A ce moment-ci de son apprentissage, il y a de fortes chances que Georges ne puisse faire bon usage de cette information. Aussi il serait possible qu'il la rejette du revers de la main, et qu'il se sente incompris encore une fois.

S'il y a ralliement autour du thème travail, d'autres étudiants montreront un intérêt à parler du travail, de ce qu'ils font, de ce qu'ils vivent. Georges aura ainsi l'occasion d'écouter et d'échanger avec d'autres étudiants qui ont des opinions similaires ou différentes.

Tout en élargissant son champ d'information concernant le milieu du travail, il pourrait avoir l'occasion d'exprimer devant son groupe les hobbies dans lesquels il est bon : la peinture, la mécanique auto, la construction de tablettes ... (L'aspect des activités non-rémunérées est un élément du formulaire de demande d'emploi). Il se sera révélé à lui-même et aux autres des aspects positifs de sa personnalité. Peut-être après un certain nombre d'expériences positives où l'expression d'intérêts de type fonctionnel aura permis à Georges de faire des apprentissages à son rhythme

et selon sa capacité, ce dernier pourra décoder ce qui lui serait utile de connaître.

Il prendra peut-être conscience peu à peu qu'il est un agent important dans ce qu'il apprend. Pourra-t-il éventuellement exprimer lui-même un intérêt pour se mieux connaître et découvrir qu'il doit modifier certains comportements pour conserver son emploi?

Cet exemple veut tout simplement mettre en relief l'importance de procéder par étapes; qu'à chacune des étapes, l'étudiant puisse être le moteur de ce qu'il apprend : connaissances, habilités, comportements. La formatrice aura alors l'assurance qu'elle a rempli son mandat d'instrumenter l'étudiant adulte.

COMBIEN DE TEMPS Y CONSACRER?

Une préoccupation d'ordre plus opérationnel se manifeste souvent chez les intervenants : combien de temps faut-il accorder à la cueillette des besoins? En bout de ligne, l'expression des besoins s'étale sur toute la vie : besoins physiologiques, de sécurité, d'appartenance, de reconnaissance et de réalisation de soi. Je ne peux donc tout me mettre sur les épaules. Je ne peux non plus, en 45 ou 90 heures, les avoir habiletés à devenir et jouer le rôle qui leur convient dans le société. Je considère donc que ce que je fais, c'est un mouvement vers ... Je me mets en route avec l'étudiant et, à un carrefour, il continuera seul.

Mais, je n'ai pas répondu à ma question. Combien de temps faut-il que j'accorde à la cueillette des besoins? Si j'ai le sentiment que, pendant cette étape, les étudiants n'apprennent et attendent ce pourquoi ils sont venus - faire du français et des maths - ce sera considéré comme une contrainte.

L'expérience de la formatrice est également un outil fort pertinent pour faire ressortir les besoins de formation. Lors des rencontres d'accueil, pendant les cours, la ormatrice recueille l'expression de situations de vie, d'anecdotes, de remarques. Elle possède donc un bagage d'information qui lui permet une lecture de certains besoins de formation.

Peut-elle se permettre de proposer des thèmes aux étudiants et agir sur l'analyse des besoins? Pourquoi refuserait-elle de jouer son rôle N'est-ce pas une de ses tâches?

LE RISQUE DE MANIPULATION

Évidemment, il est possible pour une formatrice de manipuler les étudiants, le rapport de pouvoir est évident. Mais manipuler, c'est quoi exactement? C'est 27Mfaire faire quelque chose à quelqu'un sans qu'il soit conscient que l'idée ne vient pas de lui. Alors, il y a un moyen de remédier à ce danger. Une proposition de thème peut être faite aux étudiants et ceux-ci peuvent, à travers leur participation, se réapproprier le thème et l'alimenter, lui donner son forme. Ce qui donnera lieu à un ralliement du groupe autour du thème. S'il la réappropriation ne se fait pas, il vaut mieux laisser tomber pour le moment ...

Cette approche exige de la part de la formatrice des habilités d'animation, un degré de sécurité personnelle, une disponibilité et une capacité à s'adapter à son groupe. A mon avis, c'est à ce niveau que pourrait émerger la tendance à manipuler.

L'insécurité peut jouer un rôle de frein. Il est certain que la personne qui s'est monté des dossiers très bien documentés est intéressée de les utiliser auprès des étudiants. Aussi, si le ralliement se fait autour d'un thème avec lequel elle est moins

à l'aise, elle pourrait être tentée d'éviter de vivre cet inconfort. C'est humain et c'est correct aussi! Elle pourra avoir recours à la participation des membres de son groupe pour recueillir certaines informations pertinents. Le dossier évoluera à la mesure du groupe. L'expertise du contenu sera alors répartie dans ce groupe. La formatrice demeurera le leader de la procédure et de la facilitation.

Ce qui est important, c'est qu'on s'inscrive dans cette philosophie d'intervention, qu'on se mette en route, qu'on fasse des essais, quelques erreurs. Mais toujours qu'on recherche la participation de l'étudiant à son processus d'apprentissage.

APPEL A TOUS

Je reste quand même sur mon appétit. J'aurais bien aimé savoir comment on s'y prend concrètement avec un groupe hétérogène pour la faire, cette cueillette. Y a-t-il des personnes qui ont mis en place un processus et qui ont vue des résultats sur la capacité de l'étudiant à s'utiliser dans sa démarche de formation?

Peut-être y en a-t-il qui seraient prêts à en parler?

REFÉRENCES

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PIERRETTE LAVOIE-STE-MARIE est pigiste et consultante en perfectionnement, à Brossard (Québec). Cet article vient de la revue ALPHA LIAISON de mai 1988, réimprimé ici avec la permission du redacteur.

EN BREF

TIMBRE SPÉCIAL POUR L'ANNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE L'ALPHABÉTISATION

World Literacy of Canada a demandé au comité consultatif du timbre de la Société canadienne des postes de penser à émettre un timbre spécial pour marquer l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation en 1990. Un tel timbre serait en reconnaissance des efforts de milliers d'apprenants adultes et de groupes d'alphabétisation et contribuerait à éliminer la gêne associée à l'analphabétisme.

Les organismes et les particuliers sont invités à communiquer leur appui à cette idée en écrivant à Sylvain Cloutier, Comité consultatif du timbre, Société canadienne des postes, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 1H7 et en envoyant une copie de la lettre à World Literacy of Canada.

SOUS-TITRES CODÉS : MOYEN DE LUTTE CONTRE L'ANALPHABÉTISME

Des recherches ont indiqué que l'usage de sous-titres codés pouvait servir à l'alphabétisation. Une étude de la Canadian Captioning Development Agency en coopération avec TV Ontario confirme qu'il pourrait exister des avantages et recommande qu'une étude pratique pilote soit entreprise.

Avec l'aide d'une bourse de la direction générale, études canadiennes, du Secrétariat d'État, l'agence de sous-titrage réalise une vidéo d'une demi-heure qui examine les usages éducationnels de la télévision sous-titrée dans l'alphabétisation.

LES CANADIENS FRANCOPHONES ET L'ALPHABÉTISATION

Peu de données étant disponibles en ce qui concerne le taux d'analphabétisme dans la population canadienne francophone, l'Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes et la Fédération des francophones hors Québec ont entrepris un projet de recherche pour combler cette lacune. L'été dernier, il a été demandé aux organisations au service des Canadiens de langue française dans tout le pays de répondre à un questionnaire pour donner des renseignements sur leurs membres.

En recueillant les données sur la situation de l'analphabétisme dans la population francophone, sur les ressources disponibles pour aider à résoudre le problème et sur les politiques et les programmes gouvernementaux d'alphabétisation, l'Institut et la FFHQ ont donné l'occasion aux membres des organisations francophones de réfléchir aux causes des taux élevés d'analphabétisme parmi les francophones, à l'importance de l'alphabétisation des populations de langue française et à la question de l'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle.

LES COLLEGES COMMUNAUTAIRES APPORTENT LEUR SOUTIEN A UNE APPROCHE CONJOINTE A L'ALPHABÉTISATION

L'alphabétisation des adultes est la première priorité nationale des membres de l'Association des collèges communautaires du Canada à la suite de leur dernière assemblée générale. Les collèges communautaires offrent des programmes d'alphabétisation des adultes, tout comme d'autres institutions publiques, des organismes bénévoles, le mouvement syndical et les organisations commerciales et industrielles.

La coopération et l'échange d'expertise et de ressources avec les partenaires communautaires est l'approche choisie par l'Association pour trouver des solutions à la tragédie de l'analphabétisme. Pour plus de renseignements sur les activités de l'ACCC dans ce domaine, contacter le président Richard Mackie et le directeur Tom Norton au 110 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto (Ontario) M4R 1A3, téléphone (416) 489-5925.

EN BREF

SOLLICITATION D'ARTICLES SUR L'ALPHA

Dans le numéro de décembre 1988 du bulletin "Education and Training Services Update" publié par Control Data Canada Ltd., est paru un article contribué par Paul Jones du Groupe de travail des entreprises sur l'alphabétisation traitant de la nécessité pour le monde des affaires d'accorder la priorité aux programmes d'alphabétisation dans le milieu de travail.

Alison Piper, coordinatrice des communications à Control Data Canada, a fait savoir qu'elle invite les représentants des organisations d'alphabétisation à soumettre des articles d'une à deux pages (500 mots) sur divers aspects du problème de l'analphabétisme pour publication dans cette revue trimestrielle. La revue est produite par la section d'éducation et de formation de Control Data Canada, elle décrit les programmes que Control Data et ses partenaires ont mis en place dans tout le pays pour répondre aux exigences de formation pendant la journée.

Les articles peuvent être envoyés à Alison Piper, Communications Coordinator, Control Data Canada Ltd., 110 Bloor Street West, Suite 202, Toronto (Ontario) M5S 2W7. Pour plus de renseignements, composer le (416) 964-8845.

L'ALPHABÉTISATION, THEME D'UNE PIECE DE THÉATRE

Entre août 1989 et l'été 1990, les élèves de secondaire et des organisations communautaires de tout le Canada auront l'occasion de voir une pièce écrite à leur intention par les meilleurs auteurs dramatiques canadiens sur la question et les effets de l'analphabétisme. La pièce sera composée de plusieurs histoires qui ensemble feront ressortir le fait que "l'alphabétisation mène au développement qui mène à la liberté".

World Literacy of Canada organise, met en scène et envoie en tournée cette pièce de théâtre conçue à l'intention des élèves de secondaire, des groupes communautaires, des bibliothèques, des maisons de correction et des réserves, dans le but d'annoncer l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation et sensibiliser le public à l'importance de l'alphabétisation.

Les organisateurs de World Literacy Canada espèrent que la pièce encouragera les élèves à terminer l'école pour assurer leur liberté personnelle et leurs possibilités d'avancement dans l'avenir et les motivera à prendre part à des projets éducationnels et de levée de fonds pour appuyer la cause de l'alphabétisation au Canada et dans le monde.

Les groupes et les organisations sont invités à présenter la pièce en tant qu'activité de collecte de fonds et de sensibilisation dans leur communauté. Pour tout renseignement, contacter Scott Dickson, directeur des projets spéciaux, au (416) 920-2606 ou World Literacy of Canada, 692 Coxwell Avenue, Toronto (Ontario) M4C 3B6, téléphone (416) 465-4667.

EN BREF

THESAURUS BILINGUE CANADIEN DE L'ALPHABÉTISATION DES ADULTES

Une étude financée par le Secrétariat à l'alphabétisation du Secrétariat d'État et parrainée par la Canadian Library Association déterminera s'il serait possible de compiler un thesaurus à l'intention des centres de ressources, des bibliothèques et des programmes communautaires d'alphabétisation des adultes au Canada.

Il est prévu que le thesaurus proposé donnera les termes corrects adaptés au développement de l'alphabétisation des adultes au Canada. Il facilitera à uniformiser la terminologie d'indexation dans ce domaine, à organiser le matériel d'alphabétisation et la dissémination et l'échange d'information et de matériel dans tout le pays.

"LIGHTING THE WAY"

La septième conférence nationale de l'Association canadienne - Troubles d'apprentissage sera tenue à St. John's à Terre-Neuve les 19, 20 et 21 octobre 1989.

Il s'agit d'une conférence multidisciplinaire sur les troubles d'apprentissage pour les éducateurs, les parents, les médecins, les travailleurs sociaux et les autres personnes intéressées à ce domaine. Pour de plus amples renseignements, contacter Judy Davis, coordinatrice de la conférence, 12 Colville Street, St. John's (Terre-Neuve) A1E 3J8, (709) 739-0611 ou 579-7273.

Hélène Blais

ALPHABÉTISER AU QUÉBEC :
Construire un carrefours éducatif de première nécessité

Initiative de l'Équipe inter-régionale des animatrices et animateurs régionaux en alphabétisation, de la direction générale de l'éducation des adultes du ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ) et du comité provincial en alphabétisation dans les commissions scolaires, la recherche-action sur le développement de l'alphabétisation au Québec, financée par le MEQ, avait pour mandat d'établir un inventaire complet de tous les types d'intervention en alphabétisation, et ce, pour tous les organismes concernés par ce phénomène dans chacune des régions du Québec.

Cet inventaire-terrain systématique s'est déroulé du 10 mars 1986 au 2 mai 1986. Le travail de coordination provinciale (que j'ai personnellement assumé) s'est échelonné, quant à lui, de janvier 1986 à juin 1987. Un guide de questionnement était à la base de la recherche-action et permettait à chacun des organismes répondants de présenter un portrait personnalisé de ses pratiques selon un plan d'écriture en huit volets : la nature de l'organisme, son plan d'intervention, l'organisation de ses services, ses budgets et coûts, son personnel, sa population d'apprenants, son évaluation des interventions, et enfin sa production d'outils pédagogiques.

Les recommandations des répondants gravitent autour de deux axes principaux : celui de l'administration (structure, financement et conditions d'emploi) et celui de l'andragogie (orientations et idéologies, interventions "directes", considérations d'ordre andragogique).

Conditions d'emploi

Provincialement, 50,4 % du personnel en alphabétisation des adultes est bénévole; 31,4 % du personnel est affecté à la formation; 7,4 % à la direction-coordination; 7,3 % à l'animation-terrain; enfin, 4,5 % aux services professionnels.

Le domaine de l'alphabétisation des adultes est un bastion féminin : 90,8 % du personnel de formation, 85 % du personnel de l'animation-terrain et 84 % du personnel bénévole est constitué de femmes.

Le personnel de formation est employé à temps partiel, payé "à la leçon", sans "sécurité d'emploi", sans lien contractuel avec son employeur. Catégorie d'emploi assez "mobile" (compte tenu des conditions de travail précédemment décrites), le "turn-over" ou roulement des formatrices empêche des engagements financiers de la part des employeurs pour former les alphabétiseures de façon continue, ce qui occasionne des perfectionnements ponctuels et éphémères plus que de la formation ou du perfectionnement à long terme.

Le perfectionnement pédagogique est souvent laissé à l'initiative et aux frais des formatrices et des formateurs. Souvent, ils ne sont pas financés pour assister aux rencontres, aux conférences, aux ateliers.

Au sein des groupes volontaires d'éducation populaire (OVEP), les mauvaises conditions de travail, les salaires médiocres (de 10 000 $ à 15 000 $ par année), le surcharge de travail et la fragilité de la survie

des postes d'alphabétisateur-e-s et des groupes mêmes ont souvent raison de la persévérance et de la "bonne volonté" des intervenantes et intervenants.

Les OVEP manquent souvent de fonds pour encadrer leurs intervenants de façon adéquate. L'étanchéité des réseaux institutionnel et para-institutionnel dans certaines régions du Québec fait en sorte que les groupes d'éducation populaire sont encore une fois les parents pauvres du système mis en place pour assurer une formation continue aux intervenantes et intervenants en alphabétisation. Par contre, dans d'autres régions, les OVEP profitent des services offerts par l'intermédiaire des commissions scolaires et collaborent étroitement avec elles.

Pour améliorer les conditions d'emploi des intervenantes et intervenants en alphabétisation, les répondants proposent de "stabiliser" le statut d'emploi des formatrices; d'exiger du personnel de formation travaillant au sein des OVEP qu'il bénéficie d'une expérience de l'enseignement et possède des qualifications d'ordre pédadogique.

Il faudrait investir financièrement pour être en mesure d'engager plus de personnel, avec de meillleurs salaires et dans de meilleures conditions de travail et engager des intervenants disponibles "qui n'ont pas d'autres emplois à plein temps, le jour."

Quel avenir est promise l'alphabétisation au Québec?

Les répondants participant à la recherche-action ont mis le doigt sur des points sensibles dans le milieu de l'alphabétisation des adultes québécois. Nous pourrions nous focaliser sur les points essentiels suivants :

1 l'allègement des structures et encadrements du ministère de l'Éducation;

2 un financement équitable pour tous les types d'organismes oeuvrant en alphabétisation, à quelque titre que ce soit, et ce, n'importe où au Québec, pour régler, entre autres, plusieurs problèmes liés au matériel pédagogique;

3 l'amélioration des conditions de travail des intervenantes et intervenants "directs" (rappelons-nous que 50 % du personnel en alphabétisation travaille bénévolement! ..)

4 la démarginalisation et l'élargissement du concept d'alphabétisation;

5 l'alphabétisation en langue maternelle pour les apprenants immigrants;

6 la gratuité des activités d'alphabétisation pour tous, y compris pour les réfugiés "illégaux";

7 l'utilisation élargie des micro-ordinateurs;

8 la mis sur pied d'un regroupement d'"analphabètes", d'un comité de défense des personnes "analphabètes", d'un groupe multiculturel d'apprenants;

9 la nécessité d'une réflexion andragogique sur la place de l'apprenant adulte au sein des groupes d'alphabétisation et sur la place des "analphabètes" qui n'ont pas encore entamé de démarche d'alphabétisation;

10 l'instauration d'une campagne nationale de démystification du phénomène de l'analphabétisme au Québec.

On ne peut plus nier ou balayer du revers de la main l'urgence d'accorder des services de qualité à cette partie de la population québécoise que l'on nomme "les habètes" et qui s'accroît d'année en année. Il faudra, si l'on tient toujours à considérer l'alphabétisation des adultes comme une priorité au sein du ministère de l'Éducation et au sein de notre société de bien nantis, porter une attention toute particulière aux demandes des principaux intéressés : auprès desquels ils exercent une fonction éducative et sociale essentielle.

HELENE BLAIS était coordonnatrice provinciale de la recherche-action sur le développement de l'alphabétisation au Québec

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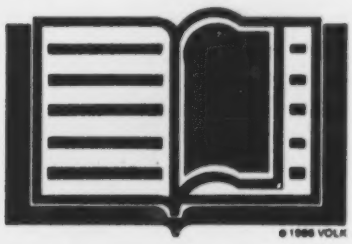

NOUVELLES RESSOURCES

LIVRES

ALPHA 88
1988 : Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec
427 pages
Gratuit sur demande, offre limitée
En français.

Ce livre est la plus récente publication de la collection Alpha en existence depuis 1978. Il contient une série de rapports de recherches pratiques et théoriques sur l'alphabétisation dans les pays de langue française. Alpha 88 est publié par le ministère de l'Éducation du Québec sous la direction de Jean-Paul Hautecoeur. Le livre est déjà dans sa deuxième impression et peut être obtenu depuis janvier 1989 en s'adressant à Madame Diane Labrosse, Direction des formations extrascolaires, Ministère de l'Éducation, 600 rue Fullum, 4e étage, Montréal (Québec) H2K 4L1, téléphone (514) 873-3241.

ANNUAIRE NATIONAL DE L'ALPHABÉTISATION

1988 : Laubach Literacy of Canada
25 $ (20% d'escompte pour les conseils d'alphabétisation)
En anglais et français.

L'annuaire national de l'alphabétisation est publié en anglais et français. Il est en vente à Laubach Literacy of Canada, Bureau central, C.P. 6548, Succ. A, Saint-Jean (Nouveau-Brunswick) E2L 4R9, téléphone (506) 642-4357.

NOUVELLES RESSOURCES

LIVRES

COLLECTION TOURNEPAGE

Marie-Carmelle, de Florence du Crest;
Le Roméo du Métro, de Claire Saint-Onge;
Fidèle Compagnon, de Serge Rondeau;
Le Voyage de Solonia, de Danielle Dolduc; et
Lenoir et le Mystère du Lait, de Sylvie Bissonnette.

1988 : Collection Tournepage
6 $ par volume plus 0.70 $ de frais d'expédition, ou 15 $ pour trois volumes plus 2.10 $ de frais d'expédition.
En français.

Ces livres de poche sont le résultat d'un concours d'écriture pour nouveaux écrivains. Imprimés d'un caractère facile à lire, leur contenu est utile pour enseigner la lecture. Ils peuvent être commander à la Collection Tournepage, 1050, côte Vertu, Saint-Laurent (Québec) H4L 1Y4.

STORIES FROM THE LAKELAND

Le programme d'alphabétisation LEARN

2.95 $ la copie
(2.50 $ la copie pour 6 copies ou plus)
ajouter 0.70 $ pour les frais d'envoi
En anglais.

Ce livre est une collection de souvenirs historiques sur les habitants et les communautés du Nord de l'Alberta. Tous les textes ont été écrits ou assemblés par des membres du personnel de LEARN ou par des membres de longue date de la communauté. Rédigé en anglais clair et simple, le livre convient aux élèves d'alphabétisation ou d'anglais langue seconde.

Commander à : LEARN Coordinator
Lakeland College, Box 1469, Cold Lake (Alberta) T0A 0V8
téléphone (403) 639-3939.

WELTHY HONSINGER FISHER : SIGNALS OF A CENTURY

de Sally Swenson

1988, 517 pages
25 $ à commander à l'auteure, 23 Bay Hill Ridge, Amberwood Village, Stittsville (Ontario) K0A 3G0

Ce livre raconte l'histoire fascinante du docteur W.H. Fisher : la vie et l'apprentissage d'une éducatrice américaine, pionnière de l'alphabétisation et réformatrice en Chine et en Inde de 1879 à 1980. "Durant plus d'un siècle de vie frémissante, Welthy Honsinger Fisher ouvrit la voie à l'éducation des femmes dans la Chine pré-révolutionnaire, devint une des oratrices remarquables pour la paix et la réforme sociale de sa génération, et, à l'âge de soixante-treize ans, commença son travail d'alphabétisation en Inde. Elle se sentait chez elle partout dans le monde longtemps avant que l'unité globale dans la diversité commence à sembler possible." Souvent appelée "la dame de l'alphabétisation", elle fut une des femmes les plus remarquables du siècle. En 1980, le gouvernement de l'Inde émit un timbre commémoratif pour honorer le travail d'alphabétisation de Madame Fisher en Inde.

L'auteure, Sally Swenson, a vécu, travaillé et voyagé avec Madame Fisher pendant les quatorze dernières années de la vie de celle-ci.

NOUVELLES RESSOURCES

LIVRES

CARIBBEAN LANGUAGES : A Language Study Kit
d'Elizabeth Coelho

Carib-Can Publishers
38 $
En anglais.

Caribbean Languages est une trousse qui sera de grande utilité aux enseignants d'élèves adolescents et adultes des Caraïbes de langue anglaise parlant une langue créole. La trousse est conçue spécialement pour les personnes qui fonctionnent dans une situation interlinguistique entre l'anglais standard et le créole.

La trousse contient des informations sur la langue et les origines des natifs des Caraïbes et des observations sur les similarités entre l'anglais standard et le créole pour permettre aux élèves d'acquérir un sens de leur valeur personnelle. Elle contient des exercices de lecture et des activités qui développent et mettent en pratique des compétence de lecture spécifiques, le travail de groupe, et des exercices de recherche. Toute la trousse peut être photocopiée et convient donc à des classes ayant n'importe quel nombre d'élèves.

Disponible à : Carib-Can Publishers
20 College Street, Suite 11, Toronto (Ontario) M5G 1K2
ou en téléphonant à : Nicholas Austin au (416) 323-0069.

THE CRAFT OF TEACHING ADULTS
Thelma Barer-Stein et James A. Draper, éditeurs

1988 : Culture Concepts Inc.
207 pages, édition brochée
17.95 $ canadiens ou 13.50 $ US à l'extérieur du Canada
(2 $ pour l'expédition des commandes)
En anglais.

Il ne s'agit pas d'un autre livre sur la méthode. Ce livre offre l'expérience pratique et la sagesse théorique de huit éducateurs d'adultes bien connus, parmi eux Alan M. Thomas, Roby Kidd, Reg Herman, Donald Brundage, Lynn E. Davie et Virginia Griffin.

Le livre comprend une bibliographie canadienne choisie et annotée ainsi que des renseignements sur le Réseau d'éducation des adultes. Chaque section est précédée d'un "sommaire de l'intervenant" et il y a des tableaux des points importants et des références de l'auteur.

Selon les éditeurs, le livre "The Craft of Teaching Adults" s'adresse directement aux nouveaux intervenants travaillant avec des adultes dans diverses disciplines et offre une nouvelle perspective aux intervenants de longue date. Le livre est en vente exclusive à Culture Concepts Inc., 5 Darlingbrook Crescent, Toronto (Ontario) M9A 3H4, téléphone (416) 231-1692.

ADULT LITERACY PERSPECTIVES
Édité par Maurice Taylor et James Draper

Date de publication : le 15 août 1989.

Prix à la commande avant le 15 août : 21.50 $ plus 2 $ de frais d'envoi.
Prix après le 15 août : 27.95 $ plus 2 $ de frais d'envoi.
En anglais.

Les collaborateurs sont du Canada, des États-Unis, du Royaume-Uni ainsi que de l'UNESCO.

Envoyer la commande à : Culture Concepts Inc., 5 Darlingbrook Crescent, Toronto (Ontario) M9A 3H4.

ACTION ON HEALTH BARRIERS :
Health Promotion with Low Income Women
de Jane Bremner, Noreen Crawford, Beth Mairs, Elaine Minsky

20 $ pour les organisations
10 $ pour les particuliers
2 $ par copie pour les frais d'envoi
En anglais.

Ce manuel décrit les obstacles qui empêchent les femmes à faible revenu de prendre des mesures pour s'occuper de leur santé. Il suggère des moyens pour relever ce défi avec un groupe. Le manuel contient également le plan d'un programme de groupe, session par session, qui a été développé par des femmes à faible revenu.

UN NOUVEAU GUIDE DE RESSOURCE SUR L'ALPHABÉTISATION

Le Comité d'évaluation du matériel du Rassemblement pour l'alphabétisation de la communauté urbaine de Toronto (Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy) a entrepris un nouveau projet en décembre 1988. Il s'agit d'une série de critiques de bons livres utiles pour les lecteurs débutants. Nous allons assembler les critiques dans un guide intitulé Good Materials and Where to Find Them : A Resource Guide for Literacy qui paraîtra à la fin de l'année 1989.

Les livres que les nouveaux lecteurs peuvent ou voudraient lire seront ceux qui feront l'objet d'une critique. Les critiques seront également utiles aux personnes travaillant avec des apprenants adultes ou désirant commander des publications pour une collection de ressources.

Contacter : Suzanne Ives, Coordinator/Good Materials Project, 9 St. Joseph Street, Suite 302, Toronto (Ontario) M4Y 1J6, téléphone (416) 961-4013.

COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINING FOR WOMEN :
Why We Should Care
Document sur les effets et la mise en oeuvre de la Stratégie canadienne concernant les emplois.

Toronto : Advocates for Community-based Training and Education for Women (ACTEW)
3 $ le numéro
En anglais.

Des copies peuvent être obtenues auprès d'ACTEW, 801 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 301, Toronto (Ontario) M5W 1E3, téléphone (416) 783-3590.

PRISON LITERACY :
Prison Journal No. 7, 1988

4 $ le numéro
Institute for the Humanities, Université Simon Fraser
En anglais.

Des copies du No. 7 du Prison Journal sur l'alphabétisation dans les prisons peuvent être obtenues de Maureen Nicholson, Rédactrice, Prison Journal, Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby (Colombie-Britannique) V5A 1S6.

VOICES : NEW WRITERS FOR NEW READERS
Lower Mainland Society for Literacy and Employment,
110 A Avenue Surrey (Colombie-Britannique) V3R 2B4
Rédacteur : Lee Weinstein
Trimestriel, 12 $ par an, 10 abonnements ou plus 10 $ chacun, 100 ou plus 9 $ chacun.
En anglais.

Ce magazine trimestriel a pour objectif d'offrir du matériel de lecture aux adultes récemment alphabétisés et d'être un support pour les intervenants enseignant la lecture et l'écriture.

REVUES

WOMEN AND LITERACY : AUTOMNE-HIVER 1988

numéro double
Canadian Woman Studies/Les cahiers de la femme
212 Founders College, Université York
4700 Keele Street, Downsview (Ontario)
M3J 1P3
Téléphone (416) 736-5356
10 $ le numéro (10% d'escompte pour les commandes de 20 numéros et plus)
(Ajouter 1 $ au Canada et 2 $ à l'étranger pour les frais d'envoi)
En anglais et français.

Dans ce numéro spécial sur l'alphabétisation examinée d'un point de vue féministe, se trouvent des contributions d'intervenantes, d'apprenantes et d'universitaires qui partagent leurs réflexions sous forme d'essais, d'entrevues, de critiques de films et de livres, de fiction, de poésie, d'illustrations et de musique.

OUR SCHOOLS/OUR SELVES

The School of Education, Université Dalhousie
Halifax (Nouvelle-Écosse)
28 $ par an (24 $ pour les étudiants, les personnes âgées et les chômeurs)
En anglais seulement.

Cette nouvelle série dirigée par des éducateurs canadiens, comprend quatre magazines et quatre livres par an, traitant de toute une gamme de questions touchant à l'éducation d'un point de vue progressiste et dans un style simple. Dans le premier numéro (octobre 1988) sont traités les politiques de programmes de cours, les services de garde, les relations entre les classes sociales, les races et les sexes, le classement des élèves dans diverses catégories, le financement et le contrôle, l'alphabétisation des adultes, l'enseignement antiraciste, les études de la femme, la télévision pour enfants, l'éducation autochtone et les réactions des enseignants, des élèves et des parents à ces questions.

La série peut être obtenue à : Our Schools/Our Selves, 1698 Gerrard Street, Toronto (Ontario) M4L 2B2. Pour plus de renseignements ou pour des suggestions d'articles ayant une optique régionale, contacter Ruth Gamberg ou Ann Manicom, School of Education, Dalhousie University, Halifax (Nouvelle-Écosse) B3G 3H5.

AUDIO-VISUEL

"JOURNEYWORKERS"

Calgary : ACCESS NETWORK, The Alberta Educational Communications Corporation,
250 $ (escompte pour commande importante)
En anglais.

"Journeyworkers" est une ressource multimédia pour la formation des alphabétiseurs d'adultes. L'ensemble comprend cinq programmes vidéo, disponibles en VHS, Béta et 3/4 de pouce, un manuel pour les alphabétiseurs et un guide pour l'animateur d'atelier. La série peut être utilisée avec l'assistance d'une personne ress ource, sur une base individuelle, pour des cours à distance ou pour être diffusée avec une discussion en studio. Les droits de diffusion peuvent être achetés séparément.

Pour obtenir la série "Journeyworkers" s'adresser à Program Sales, ACCESS NETWORK, 295 Midpark Way S.E., Calgary (Alberta) T2X 2A8, téléphone (403) 256-1100, télex 03-824867.

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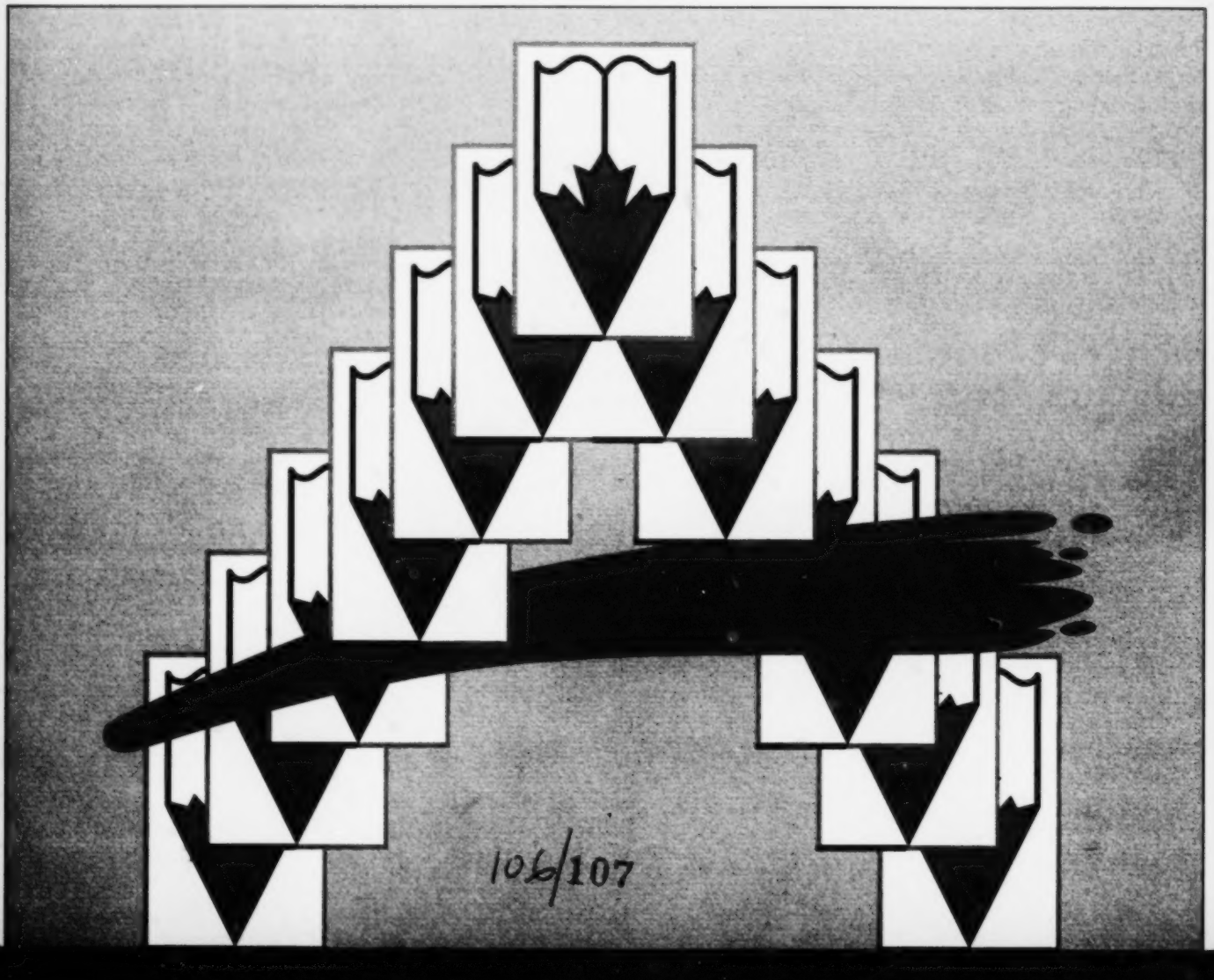

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LITERACY ISSUES IN CANADA, A WORKSHOP AT THE COMPARATIVE EDUCATION CONGRESS: AN OVERVIEW

by Anne Ladouceur, Workshop Chair

The Seventh World Congress of Comparative Education was held at the University of Montreal in June of this year.

As part of the Congress theme, "Development, Communication and Language", a small but committed group of delegates met in the Canadian workshop coordinated by Secretary of State. The Movement for Canadian Literacy was invited to recruit the members of the panel. Issues were to include literacy in the Native, Francophone, Anglophone and immigrant communities.

Papers were presented in both English and French. Although no interpretation services were available, the participants cooperated to ensure that the main points were understood. Serge Wagner did an excellent job of summarising each presentation and identifying the common needs of each community.

Almost all native languages in Canada are Once gone, they would be gone for good. Schooling for native children has tended to be in English disappearing. or French. The drop out rates are high. The native population has the highest rate of illiteracy in Canada. Literacy programmes delivered by the native community in their own languages are essential.

The rate of illiteracy among Francophones is also very high. This contributes to the difficulty of maintaining the Francophone culture. In many areas of the country, the literacy movement has had little or no impact on francophones. The situation is just as serious in Quebec.

Robin Miller provided a description of the range of literacy provision, and information about learners' conferences and literacy in the workplace programmes.

Evelyn Murialdo spoke about the problems faced by people for whom neither French nor English is the first language. The need for mother tongue literacy programmes was made clear.

I hope you'll enjoy the thoughts and ideas expressed in the articles that follow as much as I did when I heard them firsthand. Our work has just begun!

FIRST NATIONS' LANGUAGES AND THE PROMOTION OF ADULT LITERACY

by Tina Dewache, Assembly of First Nations

I am a Native educator. I want to express my concern about the state of First Nations' languages and literacy development in Native communities. There has not been alot written about these subjects, and so, my comments are only a starting point for further discussion.

There are two issues:
1) the urgency of the Aboriginal languages situation;
2) the high rate of illiteracy amongst First Nations peoples.

Many people have acknowledged the near extinction of Aboriginal languages, but there is little documentation of Native illiteracy. Often, Canadian literacy studies only briefly mention this issue, probably because Aboriginal people represent a small percentage of the total Canadian population.

While illiteracy in the Native community is seldom mentioned, it is well documented that unemployment, suicide rates, and the percentage of people in prison is much higher than for the rest of Canadians. Certainly most people agree that education is one means of escaping these traumatic circumstances. I hope that my thoughts on this subject will lead to further research and hopefully, ways of preserving Aboriginal languages and the promotion of literacy development among Native peoples.

I think the most important thing we can do in teaching First Nations' children and adults is to use Aboriginal languages. If we do this, we recognize that adults have knowledge that is useful and worth preserving. By using adults' knowledge as a basis, we will ensure that they are an integral part of the oral and written transfer of information. Leaving behind the idea that only educators have valuable knowledge that is worth teaching, and by including adults in this way, we will end the alienation many now feel. We have to wonder whether these old attitudes led to the failure of the educational system in Native and non-Native communities alike.

While I prefer to be optimistic, the status of Aboriginal languages in Canada is alarming. Of the 53 Aboriginal languages, only Inuktitut, Cree and Ojibway have a strong possibility of surviving, because there are more than 5,000 speakers of each language. However, the survival of the 50 other Aboriginal languages is less certain. There are 11 Aboriginal language families in Canada, six found exclusively in B.C. and the Yukon.

To give you an idea of the small number of people speaking some of our languages:

Language	*No. of Speakers*
Tlingit	500
Haida	225
Kootenayan	200
Tuscarora	7
Southern Tsimshian	5
Tagish	5

By the year 2000, these languages will likely disappear, as did the language of the Beothuk who once lived in Newfoundland. The reality is that if these languages are allowed to disappear, they will be gone for good.

While many Native and non-Native schools have started Aboriginal language classes, Native studies programs and cultural centres, this is not enough to preserve Aboriginal languages. In fact, often Aboriginal languages are treated as a subject rather than as a means for children to talk about something. Children are not taught to think in the language, and therefore don't recognize the power of the language, and grow distant from the spirit of the culture and the knowledge of their parents and elders.

It is clear that present programs need to be restructured so that Aboriginal languages can be preserved. A policy paper prepared by the National Indian Brotherhood says, "We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity with confidence in their personal worth". While there is more pride in Native heritage these days and children are freer to speak their own language, I am suggesting that we have not involved parents and elders in the process of educating children and adults.

A report presented to the House of Commons in 1971 stated that the school drop-out rate for Native children was 4 times the national average. Unemployment ranged from 50 to 900 percent for Native adult males. As a result of their unpleasant experiences in school, many of these people who are now parents, feel alienated and unknowledgable in a school system which recognizes one teacher as the authority on every given subject. Parents and all First Nations' people must become part of the process. If Aboriginal languages are to be saved and children and parents are to develop a positive attitude towards schooling, the whole community must be involved. When adults' contribution is acknowledged, a new attitude towards language preservation and literacy will develop. This will then establish a new foundation for further learning and literacy development. It is parents that generally shape a child's attitude in life, despite the fact that as teachers, we like to think we do.

There is a myth that Aboriginal languages are strictly oral, and have no means of recording ideas. This is not true. A new attitude toward Aboriginal languages msut take place if these languages are to be saved.

I hope these thoughts will lead to further discussion. In conclusion, I want to acknowledge the writings of Michael Foster, Robert M. Leavitt, Verna Kirkness and Marie Battiste as a basis for some of the ideas in this article.

FRANCOPHONE LITERACY IN CANADA

Researched by Nicole Boily
Presented by Ester Désilet and Andrée Boucher

If illiteracy reveals social inequalities, should we wonder why for us, the Francophones, the situation is more critical? Even though there is still no absolute method to establish the exact number of illiterate adults, the available data is sufficiently corroborating to convince us of the fact.

The Southam Report indicates that 29% of Francophones 18 years and over, are totally or partially illiterate. The rate among the Anglophones is 23%.

If one also studies the most recent available data concerning the education of adults 15 years and over, the situation is even more alarming. There is twice as many illiterate adults in the Francophone population as in the Anglophone population, and three times as many, if only the totally illiterate adults are taken into account. This gap is found, in varying degrees, in almost all provinces and territories including Quebec, where all children are supposed to have access to a French school. In some provinces, there can be as much as 50% of the population that is illiterate, and in some heavily Francophone areas, this rate can exceed 50% according to the mother tongue increasing in the following order: English, French, other first languages, and Aboriginal languages.

It is obvious that, among other factors, the more limited access that we had —and which unfortunately some of us still have — to education in French, or simply education, has had a major impact. But, even with French schools, illiteracy continues to grow. Living conditions, the division of work, schools that do not succeed in reflecting the needs, the expectations and the life style of less advantaged groups, are therefore also major causes. Illiteracy is as much a part of our present as of our past. Still today, and possibly tomorrow, some people face serious barriers to learning opportunities, means of expressing and informing themselves. We limit ourselves collectively by being deprived of their involvement, their contribution, and what they have to say to us.

For the vast majority of Francophone illiterate adults, the recent literacy efforts in Canada have had little or no impact, in spite of new initiatives, a growing involvement and a lot of good will. This finding might not be a cause to rejoice, but it may, hopefully, also be a starting point, a reason to substantially increase our determination. But, unavoidably, the part played by the government, in literacy as in other areas, is just as much a crucial factor. And this is another cause for concern.

Of course, there has been some progress: slightly increased budgets, attempts to coordinate efforts, production of publications, increased public awareness of the problem and the need to act. But we are still far, very far, from sufficient government action to ensure that everyone enjoys the right to learn, to stimulate the

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development of practices in the field, to reach out to illiterate adults, to mobilize the collaboration of all social actors, to increase research, to ensure also that the main causes of illiteracy are acted upon, to guarantee not only that literacy resources are made available, but that illiterate adults have access to these resources. This is what is needed to reach out to the illiterate adults.

Under no circumstances are the present efforts up to the task we are facing. In some regions, governmental policies are discriminatory. Policies implemented by various governments serve only the Anglophone population. An example is the funding of basic education programs delivered by Anglophone institutions. Obviously, Francophones are left out. When the activities of the voluntary sector get support, it is usually for coordination, information and material production in English, designed along the organizational models defined by the Anglophone environment. Often, these measures favor a voluntary tutor approach using training material produced in English. Most of the time, governments combine these two methods (institutionalized basic education and support to voluntary tutors) in a way that has been tested mostly in the United States and in Anglophone Canada. Given these conditions, no wonder so few Francophone projects are being initiated. An American study stressed that this method of promoting literacy left minorities out.

In other places, broadly based approaches are being developed, in English, in cooperation with Anglophone networks. This was the case until recently in the provinces with an anglophone majority and still is the case in a number of places.

However a willingness to acknowledge the need for French literacy has begun to emerge in the provinces. But it remains half-hearted and many barriers still limit the development of literacy efforts for Francophones following specific models chosen by Francophones. The lack of resources and the need for exchange, coordination and increased awareness prevails everywhere.

In Quebec, the context is of course different. There are naturally, governmental policies aimed at Francophones and Anglophones. But we are still a long way from sufficient overall policies that would reverse the imbalance of services in the Francophone and Anglophone communities.

Lack of resources, limited recognition for teaching models defined in the field, absence of a global action plan, little support for research, documentation and coordination of initiatives impose dangerous limits on literacy work. The lack of the support for adults who want to learn is general; without childcare, many women will not have access to available activities, this being only one example.

If the current state of affairs continues, the unfair situation which is the lot of the Francophones in and outside Quebec will persist. It is known that illiteracy is related to poverty, poor living conditions and various forms of social exclusion; if this is not addressed, we will continue to see young people who do not know how to write, in schools where they don't feel they belong and in which, in some cases, their language is not spoken.

On this count, there is cause for concern about the current economic, social and educational trends, which may aggravate the problem rather than solve it.

The support of the National Literacy Secretariat is appreciated, but is not enough considering the scope of the problem, the obstacles that hinder the development of resources, and the complexities of the challenge.

In the absence of Francophone networks across Canada, Francophones have had little opportunity to voice their expectations and concerns. Joint agreements with the provinces do not do much to reverse the inequities most Francophones face.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Without going into each point, I would like to stress the major elements:

- First of all, all social partners and governments must mobilize, not because ill. cy in itself is an embarassing disease that must be cured, but to show their solidarity with the adults that have to live in this situation;

- The experience, the knowledge and the mother tongue of the Francophones of Canada must be valued. This entails their participation, in as active a manner as possible, as well as efforts to increase awareness of their circumstances;

- We are speaking first and foremost about adults who live in a variety of situations and whose motivation to learn may be different; the literacy effort will therefore have to be diverse, creative and capable of meeting the needs of illiterate adults, needs that go far beyond simple access to the letters of the alphabet;

- Appropriate resources have to be put in place, where people feel at ease — networks, institutions, associations, schools that we have gained for ourselves, sometimes after a long struggle, could be the cornerstone of this development;

- Of course the right to learn and to learn in French will have to be recognized; for adults as much as foi children, this recognition is essential.

- Everyone of us has to feel part of this effort as actors rather than observers of the situation.

We will also have to build partnerships. Literacy must not be either a private endeavour, nor a pretext for useless rivalries.

The links to be established involve our readiness to respect and take into account other peoples' realities — in the Quebec-outside Quebec exchanges as well as in the collaboration between various current and future networks and partner organizations.

We can only hope that International Year of Literacy will be a special moment, not for timely and short-lived action but for a major collective effort, and new and stronger partnerships.

This is an edited version. The complete document of 22 pages is available from:

L'Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes
506, rue Sainte-Catherine est
Suite 800
Montréal, Québec H2L 2C7
Tel.: (514) 842-2766

ON THE ROAD TO MULTICULTURALISM: Reflections on First Language Literacy

by Evelyn Murialdo

One of the most serious challenges I have had to face since I began working in the field of literacy in Canada 13 years ago, has been to come to terms with definitions of "culture" and to be able to understand the impact that culture, race and language have in the learning process.

It seemed important to move beyond the many definitions found in books, texts and other academic resources, and focus on a definition of culture that stems from the practice of literacy.

So, through the years I have discussed culture, race and language with my colleagues, with the adult students and learners I have worked with, with literacy administrators, activists and community developers and volunteer tutors.

These are our findings.

"Culture is everything we have learned since the moment we are born". Learning that comes from living, believing, eating, singing, oral learning, and schooling.

This definition implies that culture is an integral part of our being, of who we are (as a people and as individuals), determining how we behave, how we express feelings, emotions, and in general terms, how we think.

In this context, culture cannot be forgotten in a learning setting, nor can it be instantly acquired or changed in a classroom. Culture cannot be shaped by others who tell us how to raise our children, how to keep our homes, how to eat, dress, and how to live and learn.

However, there is no doubt that culture develops, shaped by us in our own relationship with "our world", in our interaction with others by living and learning.

Acceptance of other cultures, other ways of living and "doing things" comes easier when:

— we are clear about who we are and where we come from;

— we feel at ease with ourselves;

— we are not subjected to pressure from others who tell us how to feel, behave, learn and live.

It is when these conditions are met that adults are ready to learn, to look at others, to relate to and endorse other practices, and to integrate these into what they already have and to who they already are. In defining differences people find unity.

Somehow, without wanting to, we define multiculturalism, although the original intention was to define culture and its place in learning.

Canada wears all sorts of skin colours, speaks in a fascinating range of accents and fosters and nurtures many cultures, so in this country, multiculturalism is so much more than singing, dancing, eating. Real multiculturalism is equal access to education, to work and to participating actively in Canadian society as citizens, parents, politicians, etc.

People express their culture in many ways, but one of the most important is through language. So, efforts to develop mother tongue literacy programs, and in that way provide non-English or French speaking people with access to adult education opportunities are no different or distinct from other efforts geared to strengthen the Canadian multicultural society.

Key Issues affecting Immigrant Adult Students as they work on acquiring Literacy and Numeracy Skills

Adult non-English and French speaking adults register in E.S.L. classes but don't come, or come to two or three classes and drop out. Also, an unusual number of adult students register in two or three schools within a given year. This "exodus" and turn over reflects the "constant search of non-literate adults for the opportunity to participate in their own language and contribute their knowledge and ideas to the learning process they are a part of".

Adult students also complain that classes are boring, that materials are not interesting, and about not being understood by their teachers. Most literacy practitioners and adult students feel that in the process of learning to read and write words that are relevant and necessary to the students' life and world, *knowing the meaning of the words is of essence.*

The joy of learning and teaching words that have meaning give people the strength to speak, to name concerns, to find solutions, and in that process they are able to "touch", and "handle", concepts that will be translated into "alive" written words.

Everyone believes that the acquisition of reading, writing and numeracy skills in the mother tongue is an important first step in the learning of a second language. Non-literate adults who do not learn to read and write in their mother tongue will find it difficult to learn one of the two official languages. The lack of English or French prevents adult students from entering other adult education programs including up-grading, skills, post-secondary and job-readiness training, or retraining based on labour needs.

Also, daughters and sons of non-English or French speaking parents who do not read or write do not do well in school. Parents who do not speak English or French do not participate in the education of their children. They cannot read information sent by the school, nor can they participate in the oral activities held at the school i.e. parent-teacher interviews, curriculum nights, open houses, etc. Daughters and sons of non-literate, non-English or French speaking parents will often become non-literate themselves. As Maria, an adult learner said, "The main reason to learn to read and write is so that my children see me study and learn. I hope that they will do the same."

As for the best environment in which to teach literacy skills, non-literate adults who do not speak English and/or French tend to remain within their communities, seldom using mainstream formal educational institutions. The lack of literacy programs within given communities and neighbourhoods i.e. social clubs, churches, sports clubs, public housing, etc. is a major barrier preventing adults from going where they feel they belong.

Although we strongly support the efforts of libraries, school boards and other public institutions, they are not likely to be used by these non-literate adults, unless a real effort is made to reach people in their communities. One member of a local social club put it well: "We will be taught things that are important to us, in our neighbourhood by one of us."

Related to this, we are concerned about mother tongue literacy being offered *instead* of English as if both were not part of a whole, but two separate learning possibilities, between which adult students have to choose. In fact, opponents of mother tongue literacy use the learner's desire to learn English as a tool against the delivery of mother tongue literacy programs. They don't explain that skipping literacy skills in the mother tongue will more often than not delay learning English.

I have no hesitation in saying that learning English or French is the goal, but mother tongue literacy is a beginning that makes people feel good about themselves, feel that they belong, and that they can contribute to the learning process.

In conclusion, there are many issues that we have to resolve together that have just begun to be acknowledged as a national concern. First language literacy is one part of the puzzle, but a part that is not disconnected from other issues affecting immigrants, and is yet one more chapter in the struggle towards establishing a truly multicultural society.

It is important for me to say that although mother tongue literacy is essential for immigrants and new Canadians, it so much more important for the Native Canadian community. If native language and culture is not passed on, the result is the total elimination of a people and a culture, in addition to the lack of equal access to education, services and work opportunities.

We advocate for first language literacy in the belief that we join the French speaking and Native communities in their efforts to obtain an equal space in Canadian society.

ANGLOPHONE LITERACY IN CANADA

by Robin Millar

Although I was asked to speak about Anglophone literacy, I think the title doesn't quite reflect the reality I want to describe. In fact, to some extent, I am speaking for literacy programs which probably include some ESL/literacy students, and Aboriginal, Francophone, and mother tongue English students. Literacy programs try to accommodate the needs of all students, whose goals may range from wanting to learn how to fill in an application form, to getting into university.

I want to focus on funding and language issues, and learners' activities.

Although most people are moreaware these days of adult literacy needs, many literacy programs suffer from constant underfunding or come-and-go government commitments to adult basic education. Many programs do not know from one year to the next whether they will "be in business". So everyone in the literacy world, including students, is anxious for much of the year. This situation exists everywhere in Canada.

Part of the problem comes from common beliefs that literacy is a short-term problem, something to be "fixed", rather than an on-going learning process that all adults should have access to. In the past, governments and society in general have not made long-range commitments to adult basic education.

People who work in the literacy field know that we need a developmental approach to adult basic education. In other words, learning opportunities should not end at 18 or 21, but should be available for all adults.

Let me turn my attention to language issues. Many literacy programs focus not only on the language and cultural needs of their students, but also the stated language needs of the community. Programs are seeking to provide learners with the best means to become literate. Therefore, some might use an ESL/ literacy approach combining English literacy instruction with bilingual teaching. In other situations, mother tongue literacy might be a focus of development. For example, in Manitoba, we are hoping to develop materials in Aboriginal languages for mother tongue literacy instruction. In other communities, such as Toronto, language issues for literacy programs may focus on Creole languages and their place in literacy programs.

The issue of empowerment, a word that is perhaps being over-used, has long been of concern to literacy workers and program organizers. The role that first language and/or dialect plays in the empowerment of learners has only recently been acknowledged. Literacy workers are in the process of exploring with learners appropriate approaches and methods to use their language strengths.

Finally, I want to talk about the work learners are planning. The concept of learners' conferences is not new in the literacy field, but not all provinces have been able to successfully organize annual events.

In Manitoba, we have had four consecutive conferences with 150 learners from around the province. The involvement of a local theatre group contributed to the success of our conferences.

In many Canadian provinces, the greatest literacy needs are in remote communities. A primary aim of a learners' conference is to provide a forum for learners to share their experiences and reduce their sense of isolation. When learners come together from across the province, they realize that they have many common experiences, needs and problems.

The conference also aims to provide a unique learning experience for both learners and teachers. Resources in many communities are very scarce, and so a number of the workshops can offer opportunities that would not otherwise be available to many learners.

Manitoba is currently producing a short video about learners, which should be available later this year.

I want to add a final word about literacy in the workplace. Many national and provincial organizations have become interested in this area. Unlike training programs which prepare people for work, workplace literacy programs seek to improve the learning and literacy skills of those already employed.

A recent report by the Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy reported significant financial losses to business due to the low literacy levels of workers. Now, some companies are willing to invest in literacy opportunities for their workers.

Cooperation between management and employees is essential so that workers are not forced to participate in educational programs, but are given opportunities in the workplace to develop their literacy skills. Tutors in these programs may be volunteers, or may be professional teachers, working with particular groups, such as second language speakers. Sometimes, the focus is on a specific issue, such as safety in the workplace.

These efforts can actively involve the private sector in the development of literacy, ensuring that literacy is the responsibility of the entire community, and not just the educational system.

To sum it up, there is great diversity within the so-called Anglophone literacy world, both in terms of approaches to teaching, and the needs of the students, some of whom are neither English nor French speaking, nor from the white Anglo-Saxon culture. Practitioners and learners are doing their best to work together to meet everyone's needs.

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Alphabétisation

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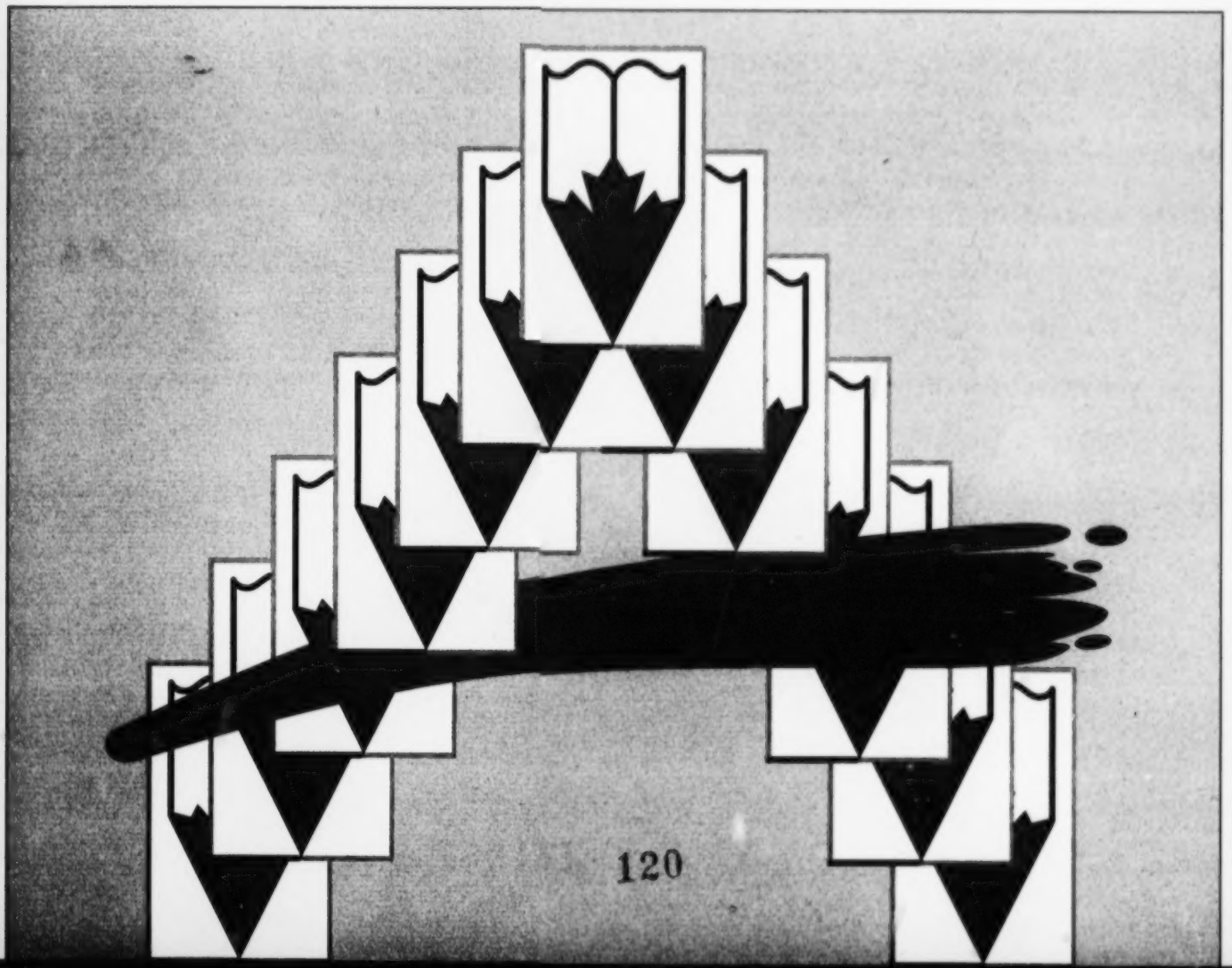
Alphabétisation Anglophone au Canada



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QUESTIONS D'ALPHABÉTISATION AU AU CANADA: UN ATELIER AU CONGRÈS D'ÉDUCATION COMPARÉE UNE VUE D'ENSEMBLE

Par Anne Ladouceur, animatrice de l'atelier

Le septième Congrès d'éducation comparée a eu lieu à l'Université de Montréal au mois de juin de cette année.

Dans le cadre du thème du Congrès, "Développement, Communication et Langue", un petit groupe dynamiques de délégués s'est retrouvé à un atelier coordonné par le Secrétariat d'État. Il avait été demandé au Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation de recruter les membres de la tribune. Les points à discuter comprenaient l'alphabétisation dans les communautés autochtones, francophones, anglophones et immigrantes.

Des mémoires ont été présentés en anglais ainsi qu'en français. N'ayant pas de services d'interprétation à leur disposition, les participants ont montré beaucoup de bonne volonté pour s'assurer que les points importants étaient compris de tous. Serge Wagner a fait un excellent travail en résumant chacune des présentations et en identifiant les besoins communs à toutes les communautés.

Presque toutes les langues autochtones du Canada sont en voie de disparition. Une fois qu'elles se seront éteintes, on ne pourra plus les retrouver. La scolarisation des enfants autochtones se fait généralement en anglais ou en français. Leur taux d'abandon scolaire est très élevé. La population autochtone a le plus haut niveau d'analphabétisme au Canada. Les programmes d'alphabétisation offerts par les communautés autochtones dans leurs propres langues sont d'une importance critique.

Le taux d'analphabétisme parmi les francophones est également très élevé. Ce facteur contribue à la difficulté d'assurer la survie de la culture francophone. Dans de nombreuses régions du pays, le mouvement d'alphabétisation n'a affecté que très peu, sinon pas du tout, les francophones. La situation est tout aussi grave au Québec.

Robin Miller a expliqué la gamme des programmes d'alphabétisation et parlé des conférences d'apprenants et des programmes d'alphabétisation en milieu de travail.

Evelyn Murialdo a discuté les problèmes auxquels doivent faire face les personnes dont la langue maternelle n'est ni l'anglais, ni le français. Les programmes d'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle sont aussi très nécessaires.

Nous souhaitons que cette rencontre ne sera pas la dernière en son genre.

LANGUES DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS ET PROMOTION DE L'ALPHABÉTISATION DES ADULTES

Par Tina Dewache, Assemblée des Premières nations

Je suis éducatrice autochtone. Je veux exprimer moninquiétude au sujet de la situation des langues des Premières nations et du développement de l'alphabétisation dans les communautés autochtones. Très peu a été écrit sur ces sujets, mes commentaires ne sont donc qu'un point de départ à d'autres discussions.

Il y a deux questions distinctes:
1) la situation urgente dans laquelle se trouvent les langues aborigènes;
2) le taux élevé d'analphabétisme des peuples des Premières nations.

Beaucoup de gens ont reconnu le fait que les langues aborigènes sont pour ainsi dire disparues, mais l'analphabétisme des Autochtones n'est encore pas documenté. En fait, les études canadiennes sur l'analphabétisme ne mentionnent que très rapidement cette question, prooblement parce que les peuples autochtones ne représentent qu'un petit pourcentage de la population canadienne.

Tandis que l'analphabétisme dans les communautés autochtones est rarement mentionné, le fait que chômage, les taux de suicide et le pourcentage des membres de la communauté en prison sont beaucoup plus élevés que pour le reste des Canadiens est très bien documenté. La plupart des gens doit certainement admettre que l'éducation est un des moyens permettant d'échapper à ces circonstances dramatiques. J'espère que mes idées à ce sujet inciteront à des recherches plus approfondies et à la découverte de moyens pour sauvegarder les langues aborigènes et promouvoir le développement de l'alphabétisation dans les communautés autochtones.

Je pense que la chose la plus importante à faire c'est d'utiliser les langues aborigènes dans l'enseignement des enfants et des adultes. Si on les utilise, on reconnaît que les adultes ont des connaissances utiles qui méritent d'être protégées. En utilisant les connaissances des adultes comme base du programme d'enseignement, on assure que ces adultes fassent partie intégrante du transfert oral et écrit de l'information. En abandonnant l'idée que seuls les éducateurs ont des connaissances valables qui méritent d'être enseignées, et en faisant participer les adultes de cette façon, on mettra fin à l'aliénation ressentie par beaucoup. On peut se demander si ces vieilles façons de penser ne sont pas responsables de l'échec du système scolaire dans les communautés autochtones, tout autant que dans les autres communautés.

Bien que je préférais être optimiste, la situation des langues aborigènes au Canada est alarmante. Sur les 53 langues aborigènes, seuls l'inuktitut, le cri et l'ojibway ont la possibilité de survivre, car il y a plus de 5 000 personnes qui parlent chacune de ces langues. L'avenir des 50 autres langues aborigènes est tout à fait incertain. Il y a 11 familles de langues aborigènes au Canada, dont six trouvées exclusivement en Colombie-Britannique et au Yukon.

Voici des chiffres qui vous donneront une idée du nombre très limité de personnes qui parlent certaines de nos langues:

Langues	*Nombres de personnes parlant la langues*
Tlingit	500
Haida	225
Kootenay	200
Tuscarora	7
Tsimshian du Sud	5
Tagish	5

D'ici l'an 2000, ces langues auront probablement disparu, comme a disparu la langue des Béothuks qui vécurent à Terre-Neuve. Ce à quoi il faut faire face, c'est que si on permet à ces langues de disparaître, elles disparaîtront pour de bon.

Bien que plusieurs écoles autochtones et non-autochtones ont commencé à donner des cours de langues aborigènes, des programmes d'études autochtones et établir des centres culturels, ces efforts ne suffisent pas pour protéger les langues aborigènes. En fait, les langues aborigènes sont souvent traitées comme un sujet plutôt que comme un moyen d'expression pour les enfants. Les enfants n'apprennent pas à penser dans la langue, ils ne reconnaissent donc pas la force de la langue et s'éloignent de l'esprit de la culture et du savoir de leurs parents et de leurs aînés.

Il est évident que les programmes actuels doivent être restructurés pour protéger les langues aborigènes. Un document de politique préparé par la Fraternité des Indiens du Canada explique, "Nous voulons que l'éducation donne à nos enfants un fort sens d'identité et une confiance dans leur valeur personnelle". Si le patrimoine autochtone suscite plus de fierté de nos jours et les enfants sont plus libres de parler leur propre langue, j'estime que nous n'avons pas participer les parents et les aînés au processus d'éducation des enfants et des adultes.

Dans un rapport présenté à la Chambre des communes en 1971, il était indiqué que le taux d'abandon scolaire parmi les enfants autochtones était quatre fois la moyenne nationale. Le chômage s'élevait entre 50 et 90% pour les adultes autochtones. À la suite d'expériences désagréables à l'école, un grand nombre de ces personnes, qui sont maintenant devenues des parents, se sentent aliénées et sans connaissance au sujet d'un système scolaire qui reconnaît un enseignant comme expert dans tous les sujets donnés. Les parents et les peuples des Premières nations doivent participer au processus. Si les langues aborigènes doivent être sauvegardées et les enfants et les parents doivent avoir une attitude positive vis-à-vis de la scolarisation, toute la communauté doit y prendre part.

Lorsque la contribution des adultes sera reconnue, une nouvelle attitude face à la protection de la langue et à l'alphabétisation pourra exister. Cela établira une nouvelle base à un apprentissage plus approfondi et au développement de l'alphabétisation. Ce sont les parents qui modèlent généralement l'attitude des enfants dans la vie, bien qu'en tant qu'éducateurs nous pensons que c'est nous qui le faisons.

Il y a un mythe que les langues aborigènes sont strictement orales et n'ont aucun moyen d'enregistrer les idées. Ce n'est pas vrai. Une nouvelle attitude envers les langues aborigènes doit prendre le dessus si ces langues doivent être sauvegardées. Il n'y a aucun doute que la protection des langues a une place à occuper dans le système scolaire et les programmes d'éducation des adultes, que les langues doivent être reconnues comme moyens pour parler et écrire.

Je veux exprimer ma gratitude aux ouvrages de Michael Foster, Robert M. Leavitt, Verna Kirkness et Marie Battiste qui ont inspiré certaines idées dans cet article.

* * *

L'ALPHABÉTISATION DES FRANCOPHONES AU CANADA

Recherché par Nicole Boily
Présenté par Ester Désilet et Andrée Boucher

Si l'alphabétisme révèle les inégalités sociales, faut-il s'étonner que pour nous, Francophones, la situation soit plus critique? Même si on ne dispose pas encore de moyen sûr pour déterminer le nombre exact d'adultes analphabètes, les données à notre portée sont suffisamment concordantes pour nous en convaincre.

Le rapport Southam révèle que 29% des Francophones de plus de 18 ans seraient, complètement ou partiellement, analphabètes. Le taux chez les Anglophones serait de 23%.

Si on examine aussi les dernières données disponibles sur la scolarité des adultes de plus de 15 ans, la situation est encore plus alarmante. Il y aurait parmi la population francophone deux fois plus d'adultes analphabètes que parmi la population anglophone. Trois fois plus, si on ne considère que les adultes complètement analphabètes. C'est là un écart qu'on retrouve, et de façon variable, dans presque toutes les provinces et les territoires y compris au Québec, où l'éducation en français est accessible en principe à tous les enfants. Dans certaines provinces, le pourcentage total de la population analphabète atteint 50%. Dans certaines régions à forte densité francophone, ce taux dépasse les 50%.

Systématiquement au Canada, l'analphabétisme augmente en gravité, selon la langue maternelle, dans l'ordre suivant: l'anglais, le français, les autres langues maternelles (allophones) et les langues autochtones.

Il est certain que, parmi d'autres facteurs, l'accès plus limité que nous avons eu—et que malheureusement plusieurs d'entre nous vivent—à l'éducation en français ou à l'éducation tout court a joué un rôle majeur. Mais, même avec des écoles françaises, l'analphabétisme continue de se reproduire. Les conditions de vie, la division du travail, une école qui ne parvient pas à refléter les aspirations, les attentes et les modes de vie des milieux populaires sont donc aussi des causes importantes. L'analphabétisme fait tout autant partie de notre présent que de notre passé. Aujourd'hui même et peut-être encore demain, des individus connaissent des limites sérieuses dans leur possibilité d'apprendre, de s'exprimer et de s'informer. Nous nous limitons collectivement en nous privant de leur participation, de leur contribution et de ce qu'ils et elles ont à nous dire.

Pour la grande majorité des adultes analphabètes francophones, l'effort nouveau d'alphabétisation au Canada n'a pas ou n'a que très peu d'impact malgré des initiatives nouvelles, une implication grandissante et beaucoup de bonne volonté. C'est un constat qui n'est peut-être pas très réjouissant, mais c'est peut-être aussi, espérons-le, le point de départ qui devrait nous stimuler doublement.

Mais forcément, en alphabétisation comme en d'autres domaines, l'intervention gouvernementale est tout aussi déterminante. Et c'est là que cela devient plus inquiétant.

Bien sûr, il y a eu quelques progrès: un peu plus de budgets, des amorces de coordination des efforts, des publications, une reconnaissance publiques du problème et de la nécessité d'agir. Mais on est loin, très loin, de mesures gouvernementales suffisantes pour assurer à tous le droit d'apprendre, stimuler le développement de

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En aucun cas, les mesures actuelles ne sont à la mesure de l'effort de rattrapage que nous avons à réaliser. Dans plusieurs régions, on peut parler de politiques gouvernementales qui, en fait, sont discriminatoires. Les mesures mises en place par plusieurs gouvernements permettent principalement de rejoindre la population anglophone. Il s'agit par exemple du financement de cours d'éducation de base dans des institutions anglophones. A l'évidence, les Francophones n'y trouvent pas leur compte. Quand on appuie les activités du secteur volontaire, c'est bien souvent pas des mesures de coordination, d'information, de production de matériel pédagogique réalisé en anglais, conçu pour les modèles d'organisation définis par le milieu anglophone. Bien souvent, ces mesures visent à favoriser une approche par le tutorat bénévole où tout le matériel de sensibilisation et de formation est réalisé en anglais. La plupart du temps, les gouvernements combinent ces deux modes d'intervention (éducation de base dans les institutions et appui au tutorat bénévole) selon une approche qui a été expérimentée surtout aux États-Unis et chez les Anglophones du Canada. On ne peut pas s'étonner dans ces conditions que peu de projets francophones se mettent en place. Un bilan de l'action américaine soulignait d'ailleurs que cette façon de promouvoir l'alphabétisation ne permettait pas de rejoindre les minorités et les populations les plus éloignées culturellement du profil moyen américain.

Ailleurs, on développe d'autres types d'approche, plus collective par exemple, mais toujours en anglais, avec des réseaux destinés aux anglophones. C'était le cas jusqu'à tout récemment de l'ensemble des provinces à majorité anglophone et c'est toujours le cas à plusieurs endroits.

Par contre, on voit aussi émerger une nouvelle tendance, plus récente, encore timide et variable selon les provinces, une tendance d'ouverture à l'alphabétisation en français.

Mais cette approche demeure timide et bien des obstacles limitent encore le développement de l'alphabétisation des Francophones en fonction des modèles particuliers que se sont donnés les Francophones. Le manque de ressources et les besoins d'échange, de coordination et d'appui à la sensibilisation sont partout importants.

Enfin, au Québec, le contexte est bien sûr différent. Il y a bien entendu, d'emblée, des mesures gouvernementales destinées aux Francophones et aux Anglophones. Mais on est encore loin de mesures d'ensemble suffisantes pour renverser le déséquilibre qui touche toujours les Francophones.

Dans tous les cas où une action gouvernementale est entreprise pour rejoindre les Francophones, le manque de ressources, la reconnaissance trop limitée des modèles d'intervention définis par le milieu, l'absence de plan d'action global, le peu d'appui à la recherche, à la documentation et à la coordination des initiatives limitent dangeureusement les efforts d'alphabé-

tisation. L'absence ou la faiblesse des mesures d'appui aux adultes qui voudraient s'alphabétiser est généralisée: en l'absence de moyens de grade, bien des femmes ne pourront avoir accès aux activités offertes; et ce n'est là qu'un exemple.

Si les tendances actuelles se maintiennent, le déséquilibre qui affecte toujours les Francophones, au Québec comme à l'extérieur du Québec se poursuivra. D'autant plus qu'on sait que l'analphabétisme est étroitement relié à la pauvreté, aux mauvaises conditions de vie, aux différentes formes d'exclusion sociale; si on n'arrive pas à agir sur ces causes, on continuera de voir arriver dans les classes ou les centres d'alphabétisation des jeunes qui ne maîtrisent pas le code écrit, à cause de mauvaises conditions de vie, d'une école qui ne leur ressemble pas ou qui, dans plusieurs cas, ne parle même par leur langue.

A ce sujet, on peut s'inquiéter des tendances économiques, sociales et éducatives actuelles qui risquent d'aggraver le problème plutôt que de le résoudre.

Le gouvernement fédéral aussi s'est impliqué dans le dossier. Plusieurs projets francophones, dont notre recherche, ont été rendus possibles grâce au nouveau programme du Secrétariat national à l'alphabétisation. Mais cela nous paraît, là encore, loin d'être suffisant et équitable pour les Francophones, compte-tenu de l'ampleur du problème, des obstacles qui limitent le développement des ressources, de la complexité du défi à relever. En l'absence de réseaux francophones pan-canadiens équivalents aux réseaux essentiellement anglophones qui existent présentement en alphabétisation, les Francophones n'ont eu que peu d'occasion de faire valoir leurs attentes et leurs préoccupations; les ententes-cadre avec les provinces, qui semblent un des modes d'action privilégié, ne contribuent que très peu et parfois pas du tout à renverser la situation d'inéquité vécu par les Francophones en milieu minoritaire.

QUE FAUT-IL FAIRE POUR RENVERSER CETTE TENDANCE?

Sans les reprendre une à une, j'aimerais en souligner les éléments les plus importants:

- tout d'abord il faudra que l'ensemble des partenaires sociaux et des gouvernements se mobilisent, non pas parce que l'alphabétisme en soi serait une sorte de maladie honteuse qu'il faut guérir, mais en solidarité avec les adultes qui vivent cette situation;

- il faudra que cet effort permettre de valoriser les acquis, les connaissances et la langue maternelle des Francophones du Canada. Cela implique leur participation, la plus active possible, mais aussi des efforts de sensibilisation qui reflètent leur réalité;

- nous parlons d'abord et avant tout d'adultes qui vivent des situations diversifiées et qui ont des motivations à apprendre qui peuvent être différentes: il faudra donc que l'effort d'alphabétisation soit diversifié, imaginatif et puisse répondre aux différents besoins des adultes analphabètes, besoins qui dépassent largement l'accès pur et simple aux lettres de l'alphabet;

- il faudra mettre en place des ressources qui leur ressemblent, où ils puissent se sentir à l'aise; les réseaux, les institutions, les associations, les écoles que nous nous sommes données, parfois au prix de longues luttes,

peuvent constituer les pierres d'assise de ce développement;

- il faudra bien sûr que le droit d'apprendre et d'apprendre en français soit reconnu: pour les adultes autant que pour les enfants, cette reconnaissance est essentielle et minimale.

Il faudra que nous nous sentions tous et toutes impliquées dans cet effort comme acteurs plutôt que comme observateurs de la situation.

Il nous faudra aussi construire des solidarités. L'alphabétisation ne doit être ni une chasse-gardée, ni un prétexte aux rivalités inutiles: les liens à faire supposent que nous soyons prêts à respecter et tenir compte des réalités de toutes et tous: autant dans les liens Québec-Hors-Québec, que dans les collaborations entre les différents réseaux, les organismes partenaires, actuels et potentiels.

Il nous reste à souhaiter que l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation soit un moment privilégié, non pas pour des actions ponctuelles et de courte durée, mais pour un effort collectif majeur, et des solidarités nouvelles et plus fortes.

Cet article est une version résumée. Le document complet de 22 pages peut être obtenu en s'addressant à:

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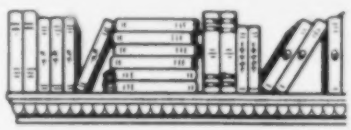

SUR LA ROUTE DU MULTICULTURALISME: Réflextions sur l'alphabétisation dans la première langue

Par Evelyn Murialdo

Un des plus grands défis que j'ai eu à relever depuis que j'ai commencé à travailler dans le domaine de l'alphabétisation au Canada il y a treize ans, a été de réussir à accepter une définition de "la culture" et à comprendre la part qu'occupent la culture, la race et la langue dans le processus d'apprentissage.

Il semblait important d'aller au-delà des nombreuses définitions trouvées dans les livres, les textes et les autres ressources pédagogiques et de se concentrer sur une définition de la culture provenant de l'expérience de l'alphabétisation.

J'ai donc, au cours de ces années, discuté le sujet de la culture, la race et la langue avec mes collègues, avec les étudiants adultes et les apprenants aux côtés de qui j'ai travaillé, avec les administrateurs, les intervenants en alphabétisation, les animateurs communautaires et les tuteurs bénévoles.

Voici nos conclusions:

"La culture c'est tout ce que nous avons appris depuis le moment de notre naissance." Un apprentissage qui se fait en vivant, en croyant, en mangeant, en chantant, en écoutant et à l'école.

De cette définition découle le fait que la culture fait partie intégrante de notre être, de qui nous sommes (en tant que peuple et en tant qu'individus), elle détermine notre comportement, notre façon d'exprimer nos sentiments, nos émotions et, en termes généraux, notre façon de penser.

Dans ce contexte, la culture ne peut pas être mise de côté dans une situation d'apprentissage, pas plus qu'elle ne peut être acquise sur-le-champ ou modifiée dans une salle de classe. La culture ne peut pas être façonnée par les autres qui nous disent comment élever nos enfants, comment tenir nos maisons, comment manger, nous habiller et comment vivre et apprendre.

Il n'y a aucun doute cependant que la culture se développe, modelée par nous dans notre relation avec "notre monde", dans nos rapports avec les autres en vivant et apprenant.

Il est plus facile d'accepter les autres cultures, les autres manières de vivre et "de faire les choses" quand:

— nous savons clairement qui nous sommes et d'où nous venons;

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— nous sommes à l'aise avec nous-mêmes;

— nous ne sommes pas poussés par les autres qui nous disent que sentir, comment nous comporter, apprendre et vivre.

C'est lorsque ces conditions sont remplies que les adultes sont prêts à apprendre, à observer les autres, à comprendre et à accepter d'autres pratiques, et à intégrer celles-ci à ce qu'ils possèdent déjà et à ce qu'ils sont. En définissant leurs différences les gens trouvent l'unité.

D'une certaine façon, sans le vouloir, nous définissons le multiculturalisme bien que l'intention première était de définir la culture et sa place dans l'apprentissage.

Le Canada porte toutes sortes de couleurs de peau, parle dans une gamme charmante d'accents et encourage et alimente un grand nombre de cultures. Dans ce pays donc, le multiculturalisme équivaut à beaucoup plus qu'à chanter, danser et manger. Le véritable multiculturalisme c'est l'égalité d'accès à l'éducation, au travail et c'est la possibilité de participer activement à la vie canadienne en tant que citoyens, parents, politiciens, etc.

Les gens expriment leur culture de bien des façons, une des plus importantes est à travers leur langue. C'est pourquoi les efforts de développer des programmes d'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle et, par là, offrir aux personnes de langue française ou d'une autre langue que l'anglais un accès aux programme d'éducation des adultes ne sont pas différents ou distincts des efforts visant à renforcer la société multiculturelle canadienne.

Questions clés affectant les immigrants qui sont étudiants adultes tandis qu'ils s'efforcent d'acquérir des compétences de lecture, d'écriture et de calcul

Les adultes parlant français ou une autre langue que l'anglais s'inscrivent à des cours d'anglais langue seconde mais n'y vont pas, ou viennent deux ou trois fois puis abandonnent. De plus, un nombre inattendu d'étudiants adultes s'inscrivent dans deux ou trois différentes écoles pendant une même année. Cet "exode" et ce roulement illustrent la "recherche constante des adultes illettrés pour trouver une occasion de participer dans leur propre langue et de contribuer leurs connaissances et leurs idées au processus d'apprentissage dont ils font partie".

Les étudiants adultes se plaignent également que les cours sont ennuyeux, que le matériel manque d'intérêt et qu'ils ne sont pas compris par leurs professeurs. La plupart des intervenants en alphabétisation et des étudiants adultes estiment qu'en apprenant à lire et à écrire des mots qui sont pertinents et nécessaires à la vie et au monde des étudiants, *il est essentiel de connaître la signification des mots.*

La joie d'enseigner et d'apprendre des mots qui ont une signification donne la force aux gens de parler, d'exprimer leurs soucis, de trouver des solutions et, ce faisant, d'être capables "d'approcher" et "de manipuler" des concepts qui vont se

traduire en mots écrits "vivants".

L'acquisition de la lecture, l'écriture et le calcul dans la langue maternelle est considérée d'un commun accord comme étant un premier pas important dans l'apprentissage d'une seconde langue. Les adultes analphabètes qui n'apprennent pas à lire et à écrire dans leur langue maternelle auront de grandes difficultés à apprendre une des deux langues officielles. Les adultes qui ne connaissent pas l'anglais ou le français ne peuvent pas s'inscrire dans d'autres programmes d'éducation des adultes, y compris les cours de perfectionnement et de formation professionnelle, la formation post-secondaire et la préparation à l'emploi ou le recyclage en fonction des besoins du travail.

De plus, les enfants de parents ne parlant ni l'anglais ni le français et ne sachant pas lire et écrire, ont de moins bons résultats scolaires. Les parents qui ne parlent pas l'anglais ou le français ne participent pas à l'éducation scolaire de leurs enfants. Il ne peuvent pas lire l'information envoyée par l'école, pas plus qu'ils ne peuvent prendre part aux activités organisées par l'école, comme les entrevues avec les enseignants, les soirées pour discuter les programmes scolaires, les journées de visites à l'école, etc. Les filles et les fils de parents illettrés ne parlant pas l'anglais ou le français finissent souvent illettrés eux-mêmes. Comme l'a exprimé Maria, une apprenante adulte, "La raison principale d'apprendre à lire et à écrire c'est pour que mes enfants me voient étudier et apprendre. J'espère qu'ils en feront autant".

Quant au meilleur environnement pour enseigner la lecture et l'écriture, les adultes analphabètes qui ne parlent pas l'anglais ou le français ont tendance à rester dans leurs propres communautés et à rarement profiter des institutions d'éducation. L'absence de programmes d'alphabétisation dans des communautés et quartiers particuliers, par exemple dans des clubs sociaux, des églises, des clubs sportifs, des immeubles d'habitation, est un obstacle majeur qui empêche les adultes de suivre des cours dans le milieu où ils se sentent chez eux.

Bien que nous appuyons fortement les efforts des bibliothèques, des commissions scolaires et d'autres institutions publiques, les adultes analphabètes ne vont probablement pas s'en servir, à moins qu'un effort véritable soit fait pour aller chercher les gens dans leurs communautés. Un membre d'un club social local l'a bien dit: "Nous apprendrons des choses qui sont importantes pour nous, enseignées par l'un d'entre nous dans notre quartier".

Dans ce même esprit, nous sommes très concernés par le fait que l'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle est offerte *à la place de* l'anglais, comme si les deux ne faisaient pas partie d'un tout, mais qu'il s'agissait de deux options distinctes et qu'une seule pouvait être choisie par

les étudiants adultes. En fait, ceux qui s'opposent à l'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle utilisent le désir des apprenants à maîtriser l'anglais comme argument contre la prestation de programmes d'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle, sans expliquer qu'en négligeant l'apprentissage de la lecture et de l'écriture dans la langue maternelle l'apprentissage de l'anglais va, dans la plupart des cas, prendre plus longtemps.

Je n'ai aucune hésitation à affirmer que l'objectif c'est d'apprendre l'anglais ou français, mais l'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle est un début qui permet aux gens de se sentir à l'aise avec eux-mêmes, qui leur permet de faire partie du processus d'apprentissage et d'y contribuer.

En conclusion, il y a un grand nombre de problèmes que nous devons résoudre ensemble et qui commencent seulement à être reconnus à l'échelle nationale. L'alphabétisation dans la première langue est un des éléments, mais un élément qui n'est pas sans rapport aux autres problèmes qui affectent les immigrants, elle représente un chapitre de plus dans la lutte pour établir une société véritablement multiculturelle.

Je veux exprimer clairement le fait que, bien que l'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle soit essentielle aux immigrants et aux nouveaux Canadiens, elle est encore plus importante pour les communautés autochtones du Canada. Si la langue et la culture autochtones ne sont pas perpétuées, tout un peuple et une culture seront complètement éliminés, en plus du manque d'accès égal à l'éducation, aux services et aux possibilités de travailler.

Nous défendons la cause de l'alphabétisation dans la première langue en pensant que nous nous joignons aux efforts des communautés francophones et de langues autochtones pour obtenir une place égale dans la société canadienne.

ALPHABÉTISATION ANGLOPHONE AU CANADA

par Robin Millar

Bien que je sois ici pour parler de l'alphabétisation anglophone, je trouve que le terme en soi n'est pas très correct. En fait, dans une certaine mesure, je représente tous les programmes d'alphabétisation, dont les étudiants peuvent suivre des cours ALS et d'alphabétisation, des Autochtones, des francophones et des étudiants dont l'anglais est la langue maternelle. Les programmes d'alphabétisation cherchent à répondre aux besoins de tous les étudiants, leurs objectifs peuvent aller d'apprendre à remplir des formulaires jusqu'à entrer à l'université.

Je veux me concentrer sur les questions concernant le financement, la langue et les activités des apprenants.

Bien que les gens soient généralement plus conscients des besoins d'alphabétisation des adultes, un grand nombre de programmes d'alphabétisation doivent faire face à un manque constant de fonds et à l'engagement intermittent des gouvernements envers l'éducation de base des adultes. Les responsables des programmes ne savent pas, d'une année sur l'autre, s'ils pourront garder "leurs portes ouvertes". Tout le monde dans la communauté de l'alphabétisation, y compris les étudiants, est inquiet pendant une grande partie de l'année. Cette situation est la même partout au Canada.

Le problème vient en partie de la croyance courante que l'analphabétisme est un problème à court terme, quelque chose qui doit être "réparé", plutôt qu'un apprentissage continu auquel tous les adultes devraient avoir accès. Dans le passé, les gouvernements, et la société dans son ensemble, n'ont pas pris d'engagements à long terme pour assurer une éducation de base aux adultes.

Les personnes qui travaillent dans le domaine de l'alphabétisation savent que nous avons besoin d'une approche évolutive à l'éducation de base des adultes. Autrement dit, les chances d'apprendre ne devraient pas disparaître quand une personne atteint l'âge de 18 ou 20 ans, mais devraient être à la disposition de tous les adultes.

Permettez-moi de me tourner vers les questions de langues. Un grand nombre de programmes d'alphabétisation visent non seulement les besoins linguistiques et culturels de leurs étudiants, mais également les besoins linquistiques déclarés de la communauté. Les programmes s'efforcent de fournir aux étudiants les meilleurs moyens de devenir alphabétisés. Il y en a donc qui utilisent un programme d'alphabétisation et d'anglais langue seconde offrant des cours d'alphabétisation en anglais en même temps qu'une instruction bilingue. Dans d'autres situations, l'alphabétisation dans la

langue maternelle est l'objet principal des cours. Par exemple, au Manitoba, nous espérons élaborer du matériel pédagogique en langues autochtones pour les cours d'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle. Dans d'autres communautés, comme à Toronto, les questions de langues dans les programmes d'alphabétisation peuvent mettre en jeu les langues créoles et leur rôle dans les programmes d'alphabétisation.

La question d'émancipation, un mot qui est sans doute trop utilisé, préoccupe depuis longtemps les intervenants en alphabétisation et les organisateurs de programmes. Le rôle que joue la première langue ou le dialecte dans l'émancipation des apprenants n'est reconnu que depuis peu. Les intervenants en alphabétisation sont en train d'examiner avec leur apprenants des méthodes appropriées pour utiliser les forces de leur langue.

Enfin, j'aimerais parler du travail qu'organisent les apprenants. Le concept des conférences d'apprenants n'est pas nouveau dans le monde de l'alphabétisation, mais toutes les provinces n'ont pas encore réussi à organiser avec succès des activités annuelles.

Au Manitoba, nous avons eu quatre conférences consécutives auxquelles ont pris part 150 apprenants de toutes les régions de la province. La participation d'une troupe locale de théâtre a contribué au succès de nos conférences.

Dans la plupart des provinces canadiennes, les besoins en alphabétisation les plus marqués se trouvent dans les communautés isolées. Un des principaux objectifs des conférences d'apprenants est de permettre aux apprenants de parler de leurs expériences mutuelles et de diminuer leur sens d'isolement. Quand des apprenants de toutes les parties de la province se réunissent, ils se rendent compte qu'ils ont beaucoup d'expériences, de besoins et de problèmes en commun.

Un des autres objectifs de ces conférences c'est d'offrir une expérience d'apprentissage unique aux apprenants tout autant qu'aux intervenants. Dans bien des communautés, les ressources sont limitées, c'est pour quoi certains de ces ateliers offrent des possibilités que n'auraient pas autrement beaucoup d'apprenants.

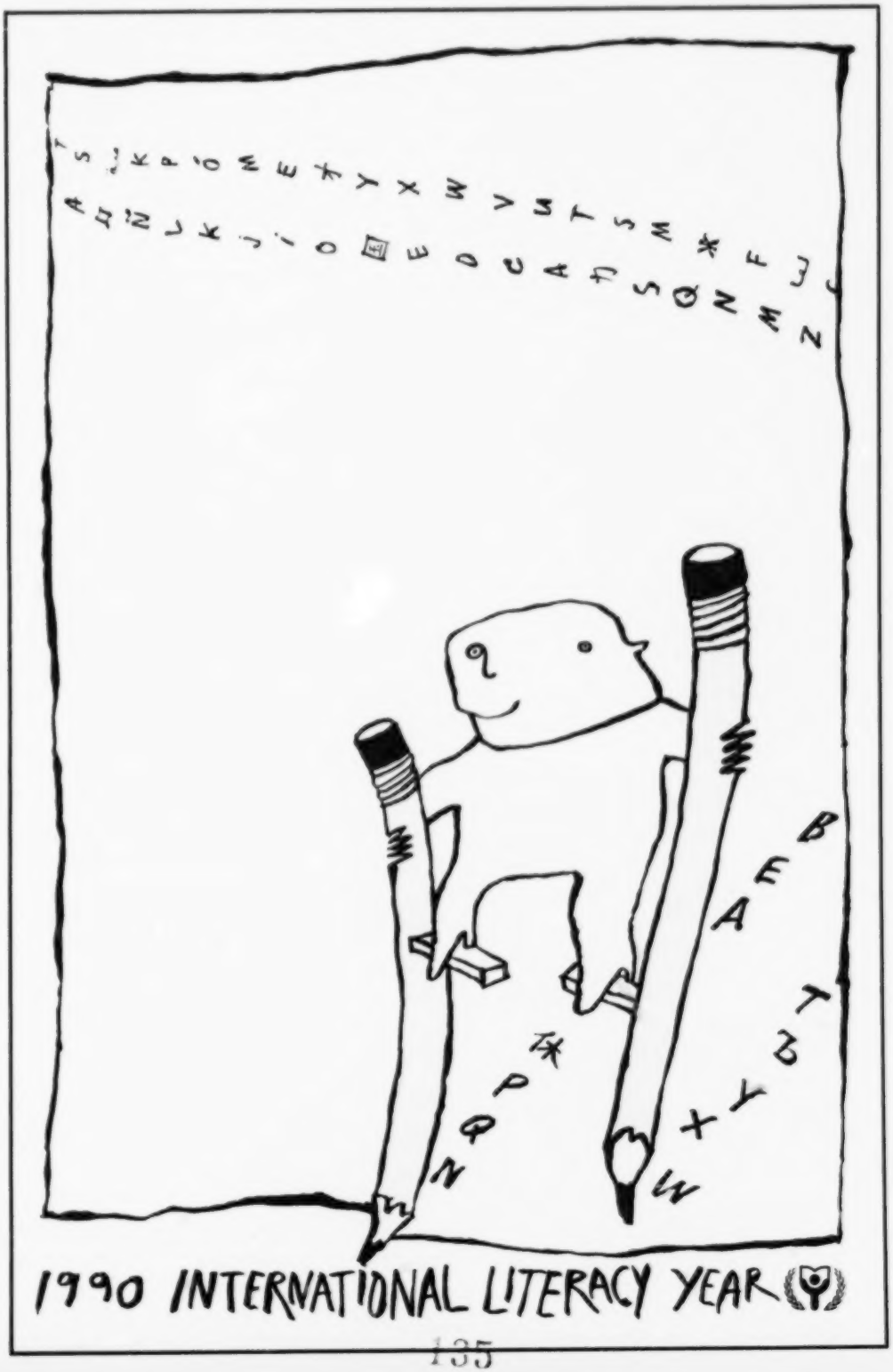
Le Manitoba prépare actuellement une courte vidéo sur les apprenants qui devrait être terminée avant la fin de l'année.

Je voudrais ajouter quelques derniers mots au sujet de l'alphabétisation en milieu de travail. Plusieurs organisations provinciales et nationales ont commencé à s'intéresser à ce domaine. À la différence des programmes de formation qui préparent les gens à travailler, les programmes d'alphabétisation en milieu de travail cherchent à améliorer les connaissances des personnes qui ont déjà un emploi.

Un rapport récent de la Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy parle des pertes économiques importantes que causent aux entreprises le manque d'instruction de leurs travailleurs. Maintenant, certaines entreprises sont prêtes à investir dans des cours l'alphabétisation pour leurs employés.

La coopération entre le patronat et les employés est critique pour que les travailleurs ne soient pas obligés de participer à des programmes éducatifs, mais qu'ils aient la possibilité au travail-même de perfectionner leurs compétences de base. Les intervenants de ces programmes peuvent être des bénévoles ou des enseignants professionnels, s'occupant de groupes particuliers, comme par exemple des personnes dont l'anglais n'est pas la première langue. Parfois, un thème spécifique est traité pendant les cours, comme par exemple la sécurité au travail.

Ces efforts peuvent faire participer activement le secteur privé au développement de l'alphabétisation, en assurant que l'alphabétisation soit une responsabilité de la communauté toute entière et pas seulement du système éducationnel.


1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

Literacy/ Alphabétisation

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Notes from the Editor

This is the first issue of Literacy/ Alphabétisation in the International Year of Literacy. To celebrate the international connectedness of our work, we have used the image from the UNESCO International Literacy Year poster on the cover of this issue.

Just as our thinking about literacy and literacy practice has undergone changes over the past decade, so has this journal reflected the changes, both in content and in form. It seems appropriate that the first issue of this particular year, (not to mention, this new decade), introduces a new approach to content.

The variety of articles and information published in this issue represents the new approach. This, and future issues will include:

- Articles on:
  - Practice ("how to" teach and learn)
  - Topical issues (e.g. funding, policy, organizations)
- Program reviews:
  - Reviews of examples of types of programs (e.g. learning centres, computer-based, tutoring, etc.)
- Reviews of materials.
- Report on developments in the provinces.
- Notices of conferences and other major events.

The new approach to content will ensure a range of information which we hope will have something for everyone. In addition, we hope that both the national character of the Movement for Canadian Literacy as well as distinctive regional differences will be preserved.

Best wishes in the upcoming year!

If you are interested in contributing to future issues and have any articles or inquiries about submissions, please send them to:

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While content for the Spring issue has already been selected, the deadline for the summer issue is **April 1, 1990.**

DISCOVERING LEARNING PREFERENCES

by Audrey Anderson

Northern Literacy Project

Every day of our lives, we all function both as learners and teachers in formal or informal ways. Although learning and teaching formulate a part of each day, most of us wou'd have difficulty describing the strategies we employ to maximize our learning opportunities. As difficult as it may be to identify how one learns best, the ability to do so may be the deciding factor in maintaining motivation for adults who have decided to improve literacy skills.

Hence, either the instructor needs to be skilled in recognizing and identifying the student's learning style and to teach accordingly; or learners need to have the self-knowledge to tell the instructor about how they learn best, must have the self-confidence to insist that they be taught in that manner, and must have the enormous good fortune to have an instructor who listens.

For those instructors who accept that it is essential to match teaching style with the student's learning style, there is still the problem of how one adequately discovers the nature of not only the dominant learning style, but also of one's dominant teaching style.

We know education to be more about relationships than about content or knowledge. Understanding the starting point of the two principal players and how they will likely relate to each other must, therefore, be the first thing we try to understand.

This article describes one way to gather the raw material about learning preferences from which teaching strategies can be developed. It includes excerpts from two interviews I conducted with learners. I started, where most of us would start, and that is by asking the students how they preferred to learn.

To get the maximum benefit from this simple but effective start, it is important to push the process further than this initial question. This article will describe the subsequent steps I took.

Process Summary

1. Establish relaxed, caring atmosphere.
2. Ask the question, "How do you learn best?" or, "How do you prefer to learn?", etc.
3. Audio-tape interview with consent of student.
4. Transcribe the interview.
5. First obtaiing the student's permission, discuss transcript and identify strengths and barriers to learning with other literacy practitioner(s).
6. Suggest possible teaching strategies/activities and discuss these with students to establish learning contract.

I happened upon this method somewhat by accident. I was developing a training video for Northern literacy practitioners on the subject of practical applications of Carol Brooks' learning styles theory. I asked five geographically disparate educators to discuss two "case studies" and to identify possible teaching strategies.

I told them that we would subsequently video-tape our discussion for the purposes of developing a training tool.

Jean Unda was one of the educators who agreed to participate, but she was uncomfortable with the "case study" approach. Case studies filter one experience through another's interpretation. Literacy students in particular had already had enough of others speaking on their behalf.

This made immediate and powerful sense to me. In response, I changed the approach. I interviewed two people, Joanne and Gabriel from Sudbury literacy programs, audio-taped and then transcribed the conversations. I sent each of the five educators a copy of the transcript which would allow us to prepare for our group discussion.

As I transcribed the audio-taped conversations, I was struck by how much was said by the student that I had missed completely. My attention had obviously digressed for various reasons: I was formulating my next question, or I was considering a previous comment. The result was that I had missed content as well as connections. I was only able to retrieve the missed information through the exercise of documentation.

I fully explained to Joanne and Gabriel why I wanted to tape our conversation and they had no hesitations or shyness about it. They not only gave me permission to use the interviews but were glad that they could assist in helping other literacy students via instructor training.

If the tape and the transcript become the property of both the program and the learner, I would predict there would be little objection to this activity. The student can use the tape to compare with a future taped conversation which may reveal changes in learning strategies and strengths. The transcript (or parts of it) can provide the content of the first or subsequent lessons. I also found that listening to the taped conversations gave me new insights into the connection between that person's spoken and written language. This was a connection I had not made through face-to-face conversations.

I would like to share some of the questions and responses from the two conversations to illustrate the process. Some questions provided much more information than I initially expected. It served to remind me that we must be receptive to clues about learning strengths at all times. I will not include an interpretation of the content here (that is the subject of another article), but I do hope you will make your own connections between what Joanne and Gabriel say and what teaching strategies would respond appropriately.

1. Establishing a relaxed atmosphere:

   This can be done in any way that is appropriate to your setting. This is what I asked:

   "I'd like to talk to you today about your experiences with learning reading and writing. Could you tell me a little bit about where you come from, where your home is?"

   "How long have you been here in Sudbury?"

   Response:

   In response to my question, *"Can you tell me a little about yourself - where you are from"*, I got a surprising quantity of useful and insightful information.

   Joanne: "I was born in Sarnia, Ontario, and I moved down here about four or five years ago now, and I am a handicapped person. I don't read and write very well. I'm going to a college program and it's very difficult right now. It's taken me about four years just to

get to where I'm at now and it feels like I'm not moving very fast. I'd like to move faster if I can. I tried to get help but there's not that much help available. You can get a tutor. I've had six of them and it seems like I know more than they know and I more or less had to teach them the way I think, the way I'd like to be taught because they have their own way of teaching."

Joanne unexpectedly gave me the key to the whole teaching/learning dynamic. She was more aware of the teacher's responsibility to respond to the student's learning style than many instructors.

2. Starting off the conversation about learning:

There are many ways of asking this question, but the important thing is, ask directly, *"How do you learn best?" "What do you enjoy about learning?" "What do you know about yourself and about how you learn best?" "When you have to learn something new and it's not something you are learning in the classroom, how do you go about learning it?"*

Responses:

Gabriel: "I learn best by demonstration, by showing - by visual means - talk. I see what I've learned either on the blackboard or on a piece of paper."

"The most difficult part of learning is - talking about the English language - is the time concept of these two different cultures are not the same, what I mean is, I didn't really know that there are three divisions of time when I want to write in English - like past tenses."

"In the Native ways, it is quite different - we conceive time as a whole - holistic view. Everything is. . . .we have no time to do this, time to go to school, time to get up in the morning, time to eat and everything - we just do as we felt - like there is no time orientation in Native society. That makes a difference. Once you understand the way the number of things in terms of time - like I said - past, present and future - there is a great difference. You understand more perfectly. When I went to school, these things were never taught in the primary school. They just tell you do this and do that so. . .no explanation."

Joanne: "OK - like with other teachers, the teachers will put something on the blackboard - say I have a problem with my math and I ask the teacher for some help. The way I like to be taught is that you go step by step and you take each step and you break it down first and then you show me how to get this answer."

"I take my time. I find that if I am rushed into learning a chapter in math and if I rush it, I don't seem to get anywhere in my head. Like it won't stay there. But if I take my time no matter if it takes me a month or two months to do one chapter, it seems to stay into my brain a lot longer than trying to do it all in one week."

Once the person has identified his/her own learning preferences and strengths, the questions can become more specific. For example:

Audrey: "You were saying yesterday that you also learn things by hearing them - that you enjoy listening to taped books, for example, and just hearing them. Can you talk about that a little bit?"

"If the teacher at that time (at residential school) has said to you, 'Well, this is the way an English speaker or the white culture looks at time and this is how we divide it', would that have helped you as a child learning English?"

"What is the most important relationship between the teacher and the student?" (The answer was as follows, "I think mutual understanding, confidence and trust. Trust in the teacher. . .and fun.")

"Do you prefer, after you get some explanation from the teacher, to work on your own?"

"Do you find that you remember things better by seeing them, by hearing it, or by writing it down? How do you remember things?"

"If you buy something and you put it together - say it's a cabinet - how do you do it? What do you do first?"

"When you're studying reading and writing, what do you find is the most difficult part of learning to read and write?"

"What kind of space or environment do you find the best for you to learn something new? If you had your choice of the perfect classroom - the perfect learning space, what would it look like?"

(Joanne's answer was, "Well, I think it would be fewer people. To me, it gets noisy and then I lose my concentration. If it gets too noisy, I tell the teacher, "Hey, it's getting too noisy in here. I can't concentrate anymore." Like, I used to wear earphones in the class so I'd block everybody out or else I'd have nice, soft, quiet music on the Walkman -something that's soothing because when there's someone talking behind me, I want to listen.")

"Do you know why you had problems in reading and writing?"

(Joanne's answer was, "I was put in a handicapped school where they didn't teach reading and writing. They did some but not a lot. The school wasn't for me. I am a handicapped person but my mind wasn't handicapped - I can learn - just give me the chance.")

"For a non-Native teacher who is teaching Native people, what would be the best way for her to learn more about Native people and Native culture?"

(Gabriel answered, "Well, I think always to learn about the other cultures, the other Native culture - to learn as much as possible, their ways, their culture mostly, how they think. . . Another thing that is important for the non-Native teacher is to recognize that Native people have a different attitude.")

"Do you think because you heard - you learned things by someone telling you - your father telling you things, your grandmother telling you stories - do you think that this is one reason why you enjoy learning by hearing now?"

The more specific questions will help identify more detail about the general learning style. Your own understanding of the learning styles theory will be reflected in these questions and is essential for fine tuning a subsequent teaching strategy.

3. Audio-tape interviews:

   If possible, use an external microphone to get the best results possible. It's important for both you and the student to be able to hear the voices clearly. Always do a test run. A copy of the tape should be made available to the student.

4. Transcribe the interview:

   This is a long task but well worth the effort. You are attempting to analyze a complex situation. You need the depth of the actual words and the connection of thoughts to help you. It is safer to go by what is actually said than by what you remember being said.

5. Discuss the content of the conversation with other practitioners:

   The interviewee's permission must be obtained before you discuss the interview with other literacy practitioners. If it is granted, you have an exciting opportunity to collaborate on possible interpretations.

   I videotaped the discussion on possible teaching strategies for Joanne and Gabriel's learning styles. (It is available on a limited basis through the Northern Literacy Project). Each one of us in the six member discussion group was greatly inspired by the various interpretations we had of the same material. We all agreed that our collective strategies were more creative, more responsive and more accurate than those we came up with on our own.

   We don't always feel we have time for such collaboration but good initial planning saves many hours in the long run. More importantly, if the learning/teaching strategy is appropriate to the student, the motivation and desire to continue will be maintained.

6. Discuss strategies with the learner:

   The learner is the final judge as to whether you have correctly interpreted his/her learning style and developed appropriate strategies. If you have, it will be readily apparent to the learner. These strategies can form the basis of the learning contract which should help both learner and instructor to stay on track in the tutoring sessions.

Audrey Anderson *is the Coordinator of the Northern Literacy Project in Sudbury, Ontario.*

EXTENDING WRITING COMPETENCE FOR ADULT LEARNERS

William T. Fagan

Teaching writing to adult learners has generally been influenced by the theories of Britton (1970) and Moffet (1968, 1985). However, some aspects of these theories are now being questioned in terms of their applicability in understanding not only the writing of adults (Fagan, 1989) but also the writing of children (Coe, 1988; Newkirk, 1989). The focus has been on the use of "expressive" narrative or biographical writing with "self" as an audience. Very often this writing is combined with journal writing in which the audience becomes someone known to the writer, usually the instructor. There is no doubt that for those adults who have developed a writing "block", who cannot think of anything to say, this is a viable approach in helping them feel at ease with writing, in realizing that what can be thought and said, can be written. Peter Elbow (1981), author of the Power of Writing, also indicates that by grounding ideas for writing within one's own life, one is able to experience what is being written about, and consequently it will be easier to give the writing voice or the power to make an audience take notice.

Unless an adult learner intends to pursue a career as a writer, the function of this kind of writing is limiting for many adults who enroll in literacy classes to develop competence in many forms of writing - from application forms to notes to a child's teacher, from grocery lists to personal letter writing. Below is a description of how writing was initiated with a small group of adults in a narrative, expressive mode and then extended into a functional type of writing which was an expressed goal of the adult learners. The three adults in the group were reading at a grade 3 to 5 level at the beginning of the program and had referred themselves for help with reading and writing.

Initiating the Writing

The session began with a discussion of why people write, which produced a range of responses, including letter writing. The discussion was followed by the instructor's suggestion, "Let's each write something". The expressions and exclamations of the learners led the instructor to ask "Are there any problems in starting?" (There were.) "What are they?" The two most common problems were "spelling" and "something to write about".

The notion of audience was addressed through questioning, "When we write something, there is somebody besides the writer often involved. Who?" "Why do you have concerns about your writing?" The notion of "writing for self" came up which led to a discussion of how obligations to audience changed when "self" rather than "other" constituted the audience. However, all learners insisted they would never just write for themselves even though they might write about themselves and then they would be writing for the instructor in the sense that he would read it and help them improve. The role of the instructor as editor was delineated and the two main criteria which the instructor would use for reacting to the writing were listed:

- an understanding of and "feel for" the ideas
- the mechanics, including spelling

One learner objected to the order of the criteria and felt that spelling should be the main consideration. After some discussion about which aspect of writing appeals most to an audience and how spelling is part of the polishing or editing, did all agree upon the ordering of the criteria, the learners wrote. A sample of one person's writing (Jean) is given below, which was typical of the writing in general and of "journal writing".

> *After school tonight, I drove Trudy home. Soon after I was home I did some laundry then I went to bed. It was about ten when I turned out the lights. Buddy my cat was playing most of the night.*

Journal to Descriptive Writing

The concern about spelling continued. However, it eventually became obvious that it wasn't so much a concern about spelling but an unawareness as to what "sharing an experience" or providing detail actually meant. In order to help them in this regard, two procedures were used.

First, they were provided with models of writing, one of which touched on topics "superficially" and the other provided much detail and many insights. The learners' reactions indicated that they could easily distinguish one from the other. However, they were still not able to carry it the next step and produce detail on their own. This led to a discussion of experiencing, of putting oneself back into that experience by thinking who, what, when, where, feelings, etc. To further develop this point, the second procedure involved providing them with a "common" experience. For example, a picture of a police funeral in a poor section of New York was shown. They were given three guidelines for providing detail.

Features	what, where, who
Associations	what it reminds me of
Feelings	participants' and mine

All the points contributed through brainstorming were written on the blackboard under the three headings. The adults still did not feel competent in writing a description. One adult expressed the problem this way. "If you show me a nicely furnished room, I can appreciate it. But if you give me all the furniture in a pile there is no guarantee I would have arranged it as well. I need help with all the information on the board, what comes first, second, etc." So the next task was to group them and to eliminate points that were redundant. Details regarding people, for example, were put into one group - police officers were lined ten deep, there were fewer civilians than police, a guard of honour accompanied the hearse, some civilians didn't stop to pay respect, some people just went on their way, there were perhaps 1000 police officers in all, some civilians didn't even stop to watch. The details were then sequenced - a guard of honour accompanied the hearse while about 1000 police officers lined ten deep stood in respect. There were fewer civilians than police officers. Some of these civilians not only didn't stop to pay respect, they didn't even stop to watch. Each learner then wrote.

The learners were asked to produce another piece of writing on their own, again focussing on detail. In response to a question on her first piece of writing, Jean decided to write about her cat, Buddy. Her attempt is given below and shows considerable improvement over her first writing.

> *I have a kitten named Buddy. He is a male. Buddy has black, gray and some brown on him. On his nose and mouth there is a little white. I got Buddy from my friend, Judy. When I was moving from my apartment to the house I now rent Judy was looking after him. The first day I got Buddy he was scared. I named him Buddy because I had some friends or buddies over the same night*

as I got him. He went to everyone as if he wanted to be a buddy, too, so that's how he got his name. Buddy was born the end of August. In November I took him for his first needle. He was very good; in fact, he was braver than I would be. He is in good health. Sometime in December I will have to take Buddy for another needle; then he will be good for another year. If I am not up at eight every day, Buddy gets up on my bed and pats my face with his paw. This means GET UP I WANT TO EAT!!! Buddy has a small bear that he plays with. I bought Buddy lots of toys for him to play with when I am at work.

At this point, it became evident that while difficulty in generating detail had led to a superficial kind of writing, this was only part of the problem. The other part of the problem was that the learners were not competent in using language to express detail. They did not have control over using adjectives, phrases, clauses and comparisons as appropriate structures for conveying detail. For subsequent writing, work on using language structures to convey detail was integrated with generating detail in written language.

Extending Description to Letter Writing

The discussion opened by placing the question "Why write letters?" on the chalkboard. This led to comments that a letter was "a chat through print"; it was sharing experiences without being able to interact with a friend; it was a substitute for a phone call and cheaper if you had to phone long distance.

This led to the FORM of a phone call - the greeting and the closing or ending. The FORM of a letter was then produced and discussed. Questions or comments sometimes necessitated a comparison between "personal" or "friendly" letters and a "business" or "formal" letter. A discussion of the content or message of a letter let the learners see that this part of a letter was very similar to what they had been doing already - providing sufficient detail about a topic or topics to allow a friend to share their experiences. Sample letters with and without detail were discussed.

The learners were then assigned to write a letter. They could write to an actual friend or write to the instructor. They varied in their choices. Since they were in a "learning" situation, the role of the instructor (regardless of whether he was the audience or the recipient of the letter meant for a friend) was clarified. If the letter was written to the instructor, he would initially react to it (in letter form) as a friend would - that is, possibly comment on something the writer had said, and then share one of his experiences. In addition, the instructor would also make one comment on the message of the letter, such as suggesting more detail at specific points, and one comment on form or mechanics. If the letter was directed to a friend, the instructor would address the last two points.

The learners seemed to make the transition very smoothly and then moved on to business letters. Writing description was also later used as another point of transition -writing formal description, particularly in response to questions.

The learners still seemed overly concerned about their spelling. Each was asked to keep a personal spelling list and work on spelling generalizations was done concurrently.

Conclusion

The students and the instructor both learned a lot from this experience. Certainly, the idea of extending or moving along through building connections, from one form of writing to another worked. The students seemed to continuously maintain control rather than getting "lost in the cracks" when another form of writing was introduced. The instructor learned the importance of providing meaningful learning situations and of

engaging the students in the discussion of why a certain kind of writing was taking place. The instructor also learned the importance of observation and listening and of questioning assumptions, such as adult learners can readily generate detail about their lives, or once generated they can express it in written language. The instructor had learned that for these adults, expressive writing could not only be used to "break the writing barrier" but could also serve as a point of extending this competency to other forms of writing.

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Kingston Literacy

by Jan Thiessen

The winner of the 1989 National Literacy Award is Kingston Literacy, a tutoring program for adults in the Kingston, Ontario area. The Program Coordinator, President of the Board and President of the Students for Students organization were all at the Annual General Meeting of the Movement for Canadian Literacy to accept the award.

Kingston Literacy has operated since 1977. What is the program like? How is it unique? What has been learned over the past 12 years?

In 1977, a survey in Kingston revealed that adult upgrading programs needed a supplement of part-time instruction. A committee of people from St. Lawrence College, Kingston District Council for Continuing Education, and libraries organized themselves to see that funding was channelled to people who could address the needs identified by the survey. A volunteer tutoring program began.

The relationship between Kingston Literacy and St. Lawrence College evolved over seven years. In 1984, with money raised by learners and tutors, Kingston Literacy was incorporated as a non-profit corporation. The Advisory Board became a management body.

The current Board has eleven members. Tutors and learners make up the largest segment of this group. Institutions, agencies and community groups are represented. The Board is responsible for goal setting and evaluation, policy making, fundraising, staff supervision, promoting literacy as a community issue, and ensuring cooperation with other organizations concerned with literacy.

In some ways, Kingston Literacy is like many programs where volunteer tutors are matched with an adult learner, and work takes place one-to-one at the learner's pace. The relationship of trust, mutual respect and individual attention leads to a successful learning experience. The adults gain confidence as well as skills. One hundred and five volunteer tutors worked with the program in 1988-89.

Kingston Literacy is a large project; 154 students were registered in 1987-88 and 232 students were involved in 1988-89. The Read-Write Centre, opened in April 1987, is the main facility. It is open five days and four evenings per week. Most tutor-learner pairs work at this Centre since this helps reduce the isolation of learners and provides a social milieu. Other arrangements can be accommodated.

Small group work is increasing. Attendance is optional, but students are encouraged to participate until particular topics are completed. Learner input determines the direction of the work. Current events (free trade, taxation) and other issues are dealt with. A sight word group combines an appreciation for country music with various reading and writing activities.

Read-Write 2 opened in February, 1988. This storefront program serves the north end of Kingston. As with the main centre, the focus is on an adult learning environment. Hours are flexible.

Tutor training has evolved to meet the needs of Kingston Literacy tutors and learners. Tutors may take part in workshops which focus on learners at introductory literacy levels, good

reading skills but weak writing, or other specific areas. Volunteers are welcome to take only the training specific to their tutoring situation or all the training available.

I asked Carynne Arnold, program coordinator, why Kingston Literacy chose to operate with volunteers rather than with paid staff. She spoke of the diverse needs of learners, and the practical problems of funding staff to work with individuals and very small groups. In the early days, St. Lawrence College was providing full-time upgrading. Kingston Literacy's role was to provide learners who were unable or unwilling to enter classes. The Read-Write Centres strive for flexible hours, and staff strive to arrange as many hours of tutoring as possible. These efforts are directed at the group of learners who want more than a few hours of instruction per week, but who do not meet the requirements of full-time programs.

The needs of these learners are hard to serve in a volunteer tutoring program. Kingston Literacy has developed some strategies to supplement one-on-one tutoring.

One third of Kingston Literacy's students use the program's computers on a regular basis. More staff support in this area is projected. The Read-Write Centres are open for private study on a drop-in basis. Small group work is encouraged for learners who want more instruction.

What are some of the special features of Kingston Literacy? Service to learners has been maintained in spite of major changes in management structure, and other difficult situations. The program is constantly evolving to keep pace with learner needs. Complacency has not set in, despite Kingston Literacy's size.

Kingston Literacy's paid staff work with each student for about three weeks before the tutor match is made. Assessment, goal setting, and orientation are necessary before tutoring begins. Students are interviewed periodically and their satisfaction with all facets of their program is discussed. They are also encouraged to participate in Board activities.

The Students for Students organization is strong. This group meets monthly to discuss ways to improve the Centre as a place to work. There are field trips to events of interest or other literacy centres. When learners are encouraged to run in elections, there is plenty of interest.

Kingston Literacy is involved in outreach work as well. Male learners outnumber female learners and

> "firmly believing [that women] have a strong influence on the literacy level of the next generation, it was decided to actively recruit mothers and structure programs around their needs".
> (Kingston Literacy Annual Report, 1988.)

This step involved several projects. The readability of some informational pamphlets was assessed. Some special writing projects have been undertaken. The women in this outreach group are expressing their needs, and programming is developed. One special project developed easy to read materials on parenting skills.

Fundraising is important to the survival of Kingston Literacy. Lobbying to maintain funding is essential. Programs have never been reduced, but greater commitment from funders is needed. Long range planning is just an academic exercise if financial support is reduced.

A Celebrity Book Auction is one fund-raising event the program organizes, from which there are several spinoffs. Carynne Arnold says that the biggest payoff is an increase in public awareness. Someone who donates a book may go on to become a tutor. As their level of awareness is raised, all of the committee's volunteers help organize fund-raising. This releases paid staff and increases knowledge about adult literacy among the public.

What is the theme of Kingston Literacy? Carynne Arnold targets community awareness: "We need to get the community involved to see that literacy becomes a human right. Recognize support - don't be too busy programming to forget lobbying and public awareness."

One element in the success of Kingston Literacy is that they listen to the community and the adult learners within. This program avoids any tendency to bulldoze ahead and simply provide the programs they think are important. Kingston Literacy is still evolving. The recipients of the 1989 National Literacy Award seek input from all and ask questions. Most important, they act on the answers.

***Jan Thiessen** is an upgrading instructor at the Alberta Vocational Centre, Lesser Slave Lake, in Smith, Alberta. Jan is also the Public Education Director for the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy.*

The Development of Good Practice Guidelines in Literacy Education

"Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit"

A Review Article by Susan Hoddinott

In a speech to the 1987 National Literacy Seminar, Serge Wagner of Quebec spoke of literacy moving out of its "pioneering stage" and of the necessity for "the pioneers [to] find new ways of organising their literacy work". He asserted the need for more adequate resourses, more government responsibility - in short, for more legitimacy - if this change were to come about. His comments were welcomed by the largely practitioner audience even though for the majority his sense that conditions were in fact improving may have seemed somewhat optimistic. Certainly those who had spent a decade or more practising in a very "pioneering" - even primitive - environment felt that it ought to have progressed but few could honestly look at the programs they worked in and see significant progress; in fact, all too many had witnessed funding cutbacks and inevitable regression at some point in their literacy practice. At the base of Serge Wagner's comments and his speech in general, though, was a call to practitioners and advocates to help move literacy out of the "pioneering stage" by more publicly demanding for this area of education the kind of attention, resources and valuing that other areas of education receive.

Literacy practitioners and advocates have begun to realize - and many of them had by 1987 - that in spite of their best intentions they may have to accept some share of responsibility for the continuing devaluation and chronic underresourcing of literacy level education. Many now see that the very "putting up with what we have" and "doing the best we can" attitudes which have through necessity characterized the majority of literacy providers, have had the effect of making continued starving of the programs possible, even perhaps acceptable. Serge Wagner recognized this in 1987 and responded by calling on practitioners to start taking a close and critical look at their practice and to be prepared to admit that in many respects the programs in place are not working. He pointed out that, in efforts to promote literacy work and to secure additional funds, practitioners and organizers often focus solely on their successes, a strategy which inevitably backfires. For the end result is that the public is given that it is possible - even usual - for quality literacy education to be provided with an absolute minimum of resources. It should come as no surprise that government policy makers and funders welcome this message and promote it at every opportunity.

But literacy policy and advocacy have matured during the last half decade and in fact there are many signs that literacy education is moving out of the "pioneering stage". For example, the concept of the "good practice" of literacy education - a notion crucial to real progress - has continued to gain currency. Many who ten years ago may have maintained that the chief aim of advocacy ought to be increasing literacy provision are today recognizing the equal importance of ensuring that what is provided is quality education. There is now a general acceptance of the need to establish some means of objectively evaluating how programs work and whether they are adequately administered and resourced.

The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (United Kingdom) published a ground-breaking discussion document entitled "Organizing Provision: Good Practice in Literacy and Basic Skills" in 1984. The document made specific recommendations on all aspects of literacy education including, for example, staffing, resources, and administration. The recommendations made it clear that if literacy education were to be provided, the education authorities, which in the United Kingdom are largely responsible for provision, should regard it as deserving of the same minimum standards of delivery as all other areas of education provided. Many in the literacy movement in Canada greeted the publication of the ALBSU document with enthusiasm and a sense of relief. Here, finally, was a government publication which acknowledged the rightful place of literacy education in the general scheme of a high quality and adquately resourced system of education. It was very clear that such a document was urgently needed for Canada and the Movement for Canadian Literacy, through its Policy committee, started to make plans to develop such a document in 1988.

As part of the background research for developing a "Good Practice" document for Canada, the MCL Policy committee has been collecting relevant evaluation and policy-related documents from across the country. To date, the committee has found that although individual practitioners, boards or program administrators often make concerted efforts to do objective evaluations of their programs, they are usually forced to make do without the use of adequate evaluation criteria since for most of the country no such evaluation exist. One very notable exception is British Columbia which, in 1989 through the Ministry of Advanced Education; the Ministry Responsible for Science and Technology; and the National Literacy Secretariat produced a model evaluation tool/good practice document. Entitled "Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit" the document was prepared by Audrey M. Thomas who is a founding member of the Movement for Canadian Literacy and author of several key studies on literacy in this country. Ms. Thomas' grasp of literacy issues both in Canada and internationally and her extensive knowledge of the field have resulted in what may be the key literacy document for Canada in the 80's.

The document contains 17 "good practice" statements which form the terms of reference for program evaluation. What makes it a particularly useful tool for evaluation is that it does not simply make broad "good practice" statements but actually attempts to define the conditions which would support those statements. For example, the "good practice" statement on materials (A quality adult literacy program uses a wide variety of instructional materials appropriate for adults and consistent with the program's philosophy, as well as a wide variety of supplementary support and resource materials) is followed by twelve specific conditions necessary for the attainment of that goal including: a wide variety of "real life" instructional material is used; materials are adult-oriented; materials are free of bias (gender, ethnicity and age); materials are up-to-date; Candian content materials are present. The evaluation includes a scoring system which would make it very difficult for programs to gloss over inadequacies. For example, the section on materials allows a score of 5 if the program meets all twelve of the conditions, 4 if nine to twelve of the conditions are met and so on. Programs which only use a prescribed set of workbooks, readers or computer programs merit a score of only 1 out of 5.

The document includes three evaluation instruments - a program questionnaire, a tutor questionnaire and a learner questionnaire.

As the author notes in the user guide, "The Program Evaluation process provides a means of identifying strengths and diagnosing possible weaknesses. The individual Tutor and Learner Questionnaires, when aggregated, provide a reality check on statement ratings in the Program Questionnaire".

Although this evaluation kit is meant to be used within programs and will ultimately only be as useful as the evaluators intend it to be, for those programs which are genuinely concerned with best serving the needs of the learners, it will provide a long-awaited standard by which to measure their performance. And if it is used as intended, it will, as the author says, turn around the usual practice of policies and funding determining practice. In Audrey Thomas' words, "when priorities have been decided upon, the decisions could then become the basis for program proposals to funding sources and thus, practice could help determine funding provisions."

Canada still needs a "Good Practice" document of the kind that the Movement for Canadian Literacy is planning. We still need to try and establish guidelines and minimum standards in areas ranging from broad questions of public responsibility for literacy education to levels of funding for resources to working conditions within programs. But the "good practice" statements contained in this document provide an excellent starting point and model for the development of such a document.

Although it was developed as a volunteer tutor program evaluation tool, the usefulness of this kit is by no means limited to the volunteer sector. Most sections could as well be used by the programs employing paid teachers. In fact, for anybody interested in either setting up or improving literacy programming, it should prove an invaluable aid. Copies can be ordered from: Provincial Curriculum Publications, c/o Open Learning Agency, Marketing Department, P.O. Box 94000, Richmond, B.C. V6Y 2A2.

Susan Hoddinott *works as a Literacy Specialist with Avalon Community College in St. John's, Newfoundland. She is Vice-President of the Movement for Canadian Literacy and Chair of MCL's Policy Committee.*

THROUGH OUR EYES

Reviewed by Doug Rankin

I introduced this collection of learner-written stories and poems to the five adults who attended small group sessions two afternoons a week. "Check this out. It's written by people learning in Manitoba."

Most of the adults took an interest in the publication (as they do in most learner-generated materials). But in this case, I was a little surprised: the computer-generated print of Through Our Eyes is not usually popular because it is harder to read than more solid letters done on a laser printer, but this did not deter our enjoyment. Unfortunately, there aren't any photographs in the publication, and I wasn't impressed by some of the generic-looking graphics. But Through Our Eyes was read by adults in the group, and some folks wanted photocopies of a poem or story to take home to read. Here are some of their comments:

"It's a nice looking cover, more like a book."

"This is a lovely poem. It makes me think about my childhood and the children I feed and hold at K-W Hospital in the children's ward."

"This picture is like an eagle tattoo story I wrote."

There was some real interest in the stories, poems, and drawings created by Native adults in the Powerview Project. These generated a discussion about Native drawings and Native life. A Native woman in the group talked about her life on a reserve. She told us about a mustard and honey hot drink that cures a cold.

We each read a favourite poem or story to the group, some with the help of a partner, some on our own. It was a fun thing to do and at times, moving. One poem which I had read before group and thought kind of didactic and straightforward was transformed by a determined reading voice and a still group of people listening to another learner's words. What makes Through Our Eyes so important is that these learners' words elicit a charged response from us.

Doug Rankin is with Core Literacy in Kitchener, Ontario

PROVINCIAL ISSUES

by Robin Millar

The following trends were gleaned from Provincial Reports submitted at the MCL Board Meeting in October, 1989. These trends are by no means comprehensive, but seem to be based on a number of issues which are emerging in several of provinces.

Provincial Advisory Committees and/or Councils

The motivations for establishment of provincial advisory committees or councils varies from province to province. In some cases, provinces have established literacy councils or committees to give direction or to coordinate delivery between several government departments. In other cases the advisory council or committee may have a broader mandate to advise the government about literacy initiatives and needs and to help formulate a provincial literacy policy. In some provinces, such as Saskatchewan, the literacy council has expanded to become a foundation and is providing the thrust for fund raising activities.

Aboriginal Literacy Programming

While Native people may have a presence in any literacy programming, some provinces are developing work with a specific focus on the needs of aboriginal communities. This work may include the development of more print for mother tongue literacy, such as being developed in North West Territories, community development , access to further education, materials development of special interest to aboriginal people.

Learner Conferences and Events

Many provinces are attempting to network learners through regional learner events or through provincial conferences, such as the annual Learners' Conference in Manitoba. The MCL Learners' Committee would welcome information about such events from all provinces.

Publicity Initiatives

In the past year a number of provinces have produced videos for public broadcast use in order to raise awareness about literacy and to attract potential students and/or volunteers. New posters and publicity information is available for both ILY and local program information. The Ontario Literacy Coalition has T-shirts for sale for ILY. Further information is available from the MCL office.

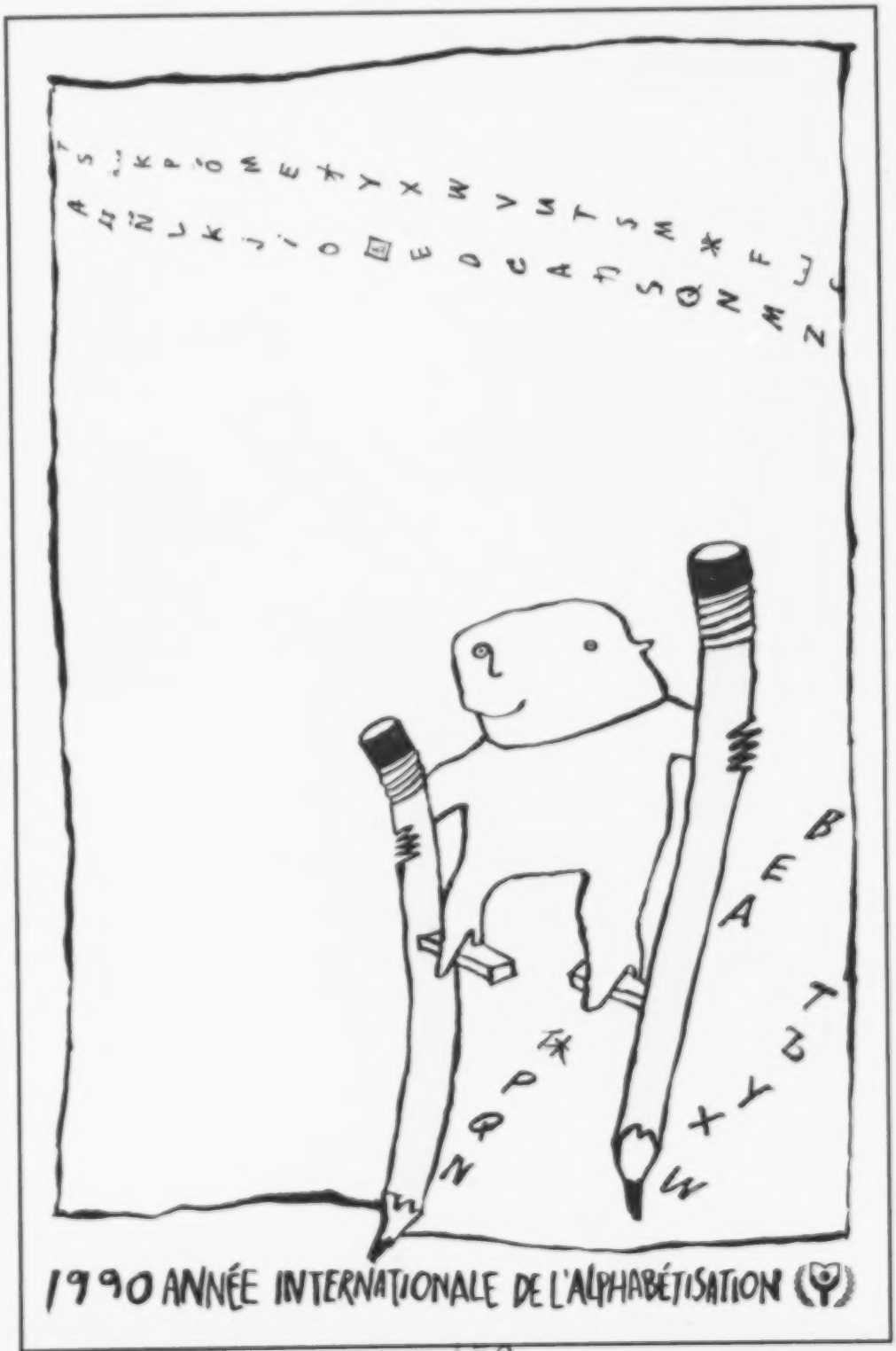
***Robin Millar** is the Adult Learning Specialist for the Literacy Office, Department of Education and Training, Government of Manitoba. She is also on the Publications Committee for MCL.*

NEWS BRIEFS

BROCK UNIVERSITY

As part of the growing interest in family literacy, Adele Thomas of Brock University has received a seed grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to survey family literacy projects across Canada. Because of the varied nature of these programs, help is needed to gauge the full extent of Canadian efforts in this new and important area of literacy. Will you help?

If you are an individual or organization involved in any aspect of family literacy, please send a brief description of your program or involvement to: Dr. Adele Thomas, Faculty of Education, Brock University, St. Catherines, Ontario L2S 3A1. Please include information on: sponsor of the program, the nature of the literacy activity, and the extent of family involvement.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Nous tenons à reconnaître l'appui du Secrétariat national pour l'alphabétisation

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Notes de la rédactrice en chef

Voici le premier numéro d'Alphabétisation de l'Année internationale de l'Alphabétisation. Afin de célébrer la connexion internationale de notre travail, nous nous sommes servis de l'image de l'affiche de AIA de l'UNESCO pour la couverture de ce numéro. Tout comme notre pensée à propos de l'alphabétisation et de la pratique de l'alphabétisation a subi des changements au cours de la décennie qui vient de passer, ce journal réflète aussi des changements dans la forme et dans le contenu. Il semble donc à propos que le premier numéro de cette année particulière (sans compter cette nouvelle décennie) présente une nouvelle approche au contenu. La variété d'articles et d'informations publiés dans ce numéro représente cette nouvelle approche. Désormais, tout comme dans ce numéro, les numéros suivants comprendront:

- des articles sur:
  - la pratique ("comment" enseigner et apprendre) des sujets d'actualité (levée de fonds, politique, organisation)
- des comptes rendus des programmes :
  - comptes rendues des exemples des genres de programmes (centres d'apprentissage, à base d'ordinateur, leçons particulières, etc.)
- des comptes rendus des matériaux
- des rapports sur les développements dans les provinces
- des avis de conférences et autres événements

La nouvelle approche au contenu assurera une gamme d'information qui, nous l'espérons, offrira quelque chose pour tous. De plus, nous espérons que le caractère national du Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation ainsi que les différentes caractéristiques régionales seront préservées.

Meilleurs souhaits pour l'année à venir.

Prière de faire porvenir toutes questions ou soumissions à :

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L'identification des styles d'apprentissage préférés

par Audrey Anderson
Northern Literacy Project

Chaque jour de notre vie, chacun de nous fonctionnons de façon formelle ou informelle, comme apprenant et comme enseignant. Bien que l'apprentissage et l'enseignement font partie du quotidien, la plupart d'entre nous aurions de la difficulté à décrire les stratégies que nous employons lorsqu'on profite d'une occasion pour apprendre. Si difficile qu'il soit d'identifier la meilleure façon que nous apprenons, la capacité de le faire pourrait être le facteur décisif pour maintenir la motivation des adultes qui ont décidé d'améliorer leurs compétences en lecture et en rédaction.

Donc, l'enseignant doit être assez habile pour reconnaître et identifier le style d'apprentissage préféré de l'apprenant afin de lui enseigner de façon appropriée, ou bien l'apprenant doit se connaître et pouvoir communiquer à l'enseignant la façon dont il apprend le mieux. De plus, l'apprenant doit avoir la confiance en lui-même afin de pouvoir insister qu'on lui enseigne de la façon voulue, et il doit avoir la bonne chance d'avoir un enseignant prêt à l'écouter.

Même pour les enseignants qui acceptent qu'il est essentiel que le style d'enseignement soit de pair avec le style d'apprentissage préféré de l'apprenant, il demeure un problème : celui de découvrir la nature du style principal d'apprentissage de l'apprenant, ainsi que leur propre style d'enseignement principal.

Nous savons que dans le domaine de l'apprentissage, les rapports entre les gens sont plus importants que le contenu ou le savoir. Le point de départ des deux joueurs principaux et l'échange qu'il y aura entre eux doivent donc être les premières choses que nous devions tenter de comprendre.

Cet article décrira comment recueillir le matériel brut nécessaire pour comprendre les styles d'apprentissage préférés, et d'où des stratégies d'enseignement pourraient être développées. L'article comprend des extraits de deux entrevues que j'ai menées avec des apprenants. J'ai commencé là où la plupart de nous commencerions - en leur demandant comment ils préfèrent apprendre.

Afin de tirer le maximum de ce simple point de départ efficace, il est important d'aller au delà de cette première question. Cet article décrira les démarches ultérieures que j'ai entreprises.

Le sommaire du processus

1. Établir une ambiance détendue et chaleureuse.
2. Poser la question "Comment apprenez-vous le mieux?" ou, "Comment préferez vous apprendre?" etc...
3. Enregistrer l'entrevue sur cassette, avec le consentement de l'apprenant.
4. Transcrire l'entrevue.
5. Discuter de la transcription et identifier les obstacles à l'apprentissage avec d'autres praticiens en alphabétisation (demander la permission de l'apprenant).
6. Suggérer des stratégies et des activités d'enseignement possibles et discuter de celles-ci avec les étudiants dans le but d'établir un contrat d'apprentissage.

C'est un peu par hasard que j'ai trouvé cette méthode. J'étais en train de développer un vidéo de formation pour les praticiens du nord en alphabétisation portant sur les applications pratiques de la théorie de Carol Brook, théorie des différents styles d'apprentissage. J'ai demandé à cinq éducateurs de différentes régions,

de discuter de deux dossiers d'étude et d'identifier des stratégies possibles d'enseignement. Je leur ai dit que plus tard nous allions enregistrer sur vidéo notre discussion afin de développer un outil de formation.

Jean Unda, éducatrice, était une des participantes. Mais elle n'était pas confortable avec l'idée du dossier d'étude. D'après elle, dans les dossiers d'étude, les expériences d'une personne sont filtrées à travers l'interprétation d'une autre personne. Les étudiants en alphabétisation en ont eu bien assez des gens qui parlent pour eux.

D'après-moi, ses paroles abondaient de bon sens. J'ai immédiatement changé mon approche. J'ai interviewé deux personnes, Joanne et Gabriel du programme d'alphabétisation de Sudbury. J'ai enregistré et transcrit nos conversations. Une copie de la transcription a été envoyé aux cinq éducateurs, ce qui nous permettait de nous préparer pour la discussion de groupe.

Alors que je transcrivais ces conversations enregistrées, j'ai été étonné par le montant d'information fournie par l'apprenant qui m'avait échappé. Mon attention divaguait pour de différentes raisons, soit que je pensais déjà à ma prochaine question ou que je réfléchissais sur le commentaire précédent. Le résultat : j'avais manqué du contenu ainsi que certains liens. Je n'ai été capable de récuperer l'information perdue qu'en faisant la transcription.

J'ai expliqué à Joanne et à Gabriel pourquoi je voulais enregistrer nos conversations et ils n'avaient aucune hésitation, ni de gêne à ce sujet. Ils m'ont accordé non seulement la permission d'utiliser ces entrevues, mais ils étaient contents de pouvoir aider d'autres étudiants en alphabétisation en participant à la formation des enseignants.

Si l'enregistrement et la transcription deviennent la propriété du programme et de l'apprenant, je crois qu'il y aurait peu d'objections au processus mentionné ci-haut. Les étudiants peuvent utiliser l'enregistrement afin de le comparer à des enregistrements ultérieurs qui se montreraient révélateurs de changements de forces et de stratégies dans l'apprentissage. La transcription, ou certains de ses extraits, pourraient servir de contenu lors d'une première leçon ou de leçons ultérieures. J'ai aussi trouvé, en écoutant les conversations enregistrées, que cela me permettait de mieux comprendre le lien entre l'oral et l'écrit chez une personne. C'était un lien que je n'avais pas fait lors de nos conversations en tête-à-tête.

Je voudrais partager avec vous quelques-unes des questions et des réponses tirées des conversations avec Gabriel et Joanne afin d'illustrer le processus. Certaines questions ont fourni beaucoup plus d'information que je l'aurais prévu. Cela m'a rappelée que nous devons toujours être à l'écoute pour découvrir des forces d'apprentissage des apprenants. Je ne vais pas inclure une interprétation du contenu (cela servira de matière pour un autre article); mais j'espère que vous ferez vos propres liens entre ce que Joanne et Gabriel disent et les stratégies d'enseignement qui répondraient à leurs besoins.

1. Établir une ambiance détendue.

   Ceci peut être fait de n'importe quelle façon propice à votre milieu. Voici ce que j'ai demandé.

   "J'aimerais vous parler aujourd'hui de vos expériences, en ce qui concerne l'apprentissage, la lecture et la rédaction. Pourriez-vous me dire brièvement d'où vous venez, où vous habitez? Depuis quand êtes-vous à Sudbury?"

   Réponse :

   En réponse à ma question, *"Pourriez-vous me parlez de vous - d'où vous venez?"* j'ai eu une quantité surprenante de renseignements utiles et profondes.

   Joanne : "Je suis née à Sudbury en Ontario. J'ai démémagé ici il y a quatre ou cinq ans, et je suis une personne handicapée. Je ne lis pas et je n'écris pas très bien. Je suis des cours au collège et c'est

très difficile en ce moment. Ça m'a pris quatre ans pour en être où je suis maintenant et je n'ai pas l'impression d'avancer très vite. J'aimerais pouvoir avancer plus rapidement. J'ai essayé d'avoir de l'aide, mais il y en a très peu de disponible. Je pourrais avoir un enseignant privé. J'en ai eu six et je semble en savoir plus long qu'eux et j'ai eu plus ou moins à leur montrer la façon que je pense, la façon que je voudrais qu'on m'enseigne parce qu'ils ont leur propre méthode d'enseignement."

Sans s'en rendre compte, Joanne m'a livré le secret de la dynamique de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage. Elle était plus consciente de la responsabilité de l'enseignant, c'est-à-dire de répondre au style d'apprentissage de l'apprenant, préféré que le sont plusieurs enseignants.

2. Entamer la conversation à propos de l'apprentissage.

Il y a plusieurs façons de poser la question, mais l'important c'est de la poser directement, *"Comment apprennez vous le mieux? Qu'est ce que vous aimez à propos de l'apprentissage? Qu'est-ce que vous savez à propos de vous-même et de la façon que vous apprenez le mieux? Lorsque vous apprenez quelque chose de nouveau et que ce n'est pas quelque chose que vous apprenez en classe comment faites-vous pour l'apprendre?"*

Réponses :

Gabriel : "J'apprends le mieux lorsqu'un concept m'est démontré - en me le montrant par moyen visuel et par explication orale. Je vois ce que j'ai appris sur le tableau noir ou sur une feuille de papier."

"Ce qui est le plus difficile dans l'apprentissage - en ce qui concerne la langue anglaise - c'est que le concept du temps de ces deux différentes cultures n'est pas le même, ce que je veux dire c'est, lorsque je voulais écrire en anglais, je ne savais pas qu'il y avait trois divisions de temps - le passé par exemple.

"Chez les Autochtones, c'est assez différent - nous concevons le temps comme un tout - de façon holistique. En Anglais tout est... nous n'avons pas de temps pour faire ceci, le temps pour aller à l'école, le temps pour se lever le matin, le temps pour manger et tout - nous faisons tout simplement comme nous voulons - c'est comme s'il n'y a aucune orientation de temps dans la société autochtone. Ce qui fait que c'est très différent. Lorsque vous comprenez la façon, le nombre de choses en termes de temps - comme j'ai dit - passé, présent et futur - il y a une très grande différence. Vous comprenez plus parfaitement. Lorsque j'ai été à l'école, ces choses ne m'ont pas été enseignées au primaire. Ils nous disaient : f"aites ceci et faites cela de cette façon... et aucune explication."

Joanne : "Bon - avec d'autres enseignants, ils vont écrire quelque chose au tableau noir - et disons que j'ai un problème de mathématiques et que je demande à l'enseignant pour de l'aide. La façon que j'aime que l'on m'enseigne c'est étape par étape, et on prend chaque étape, on l'analyse et de là, on me montre comment obtenir la réponse."

"Je prends mon temps. Je trouve que si on m'oblige à apprendre rapidement un chapitre en mathé et je m'y précipite, je n'aboutis pas, dans ma tête ça ne colle pas. Mais si je prends mon temps pour faire un chapitre, peu importe si c'est un mois ou deux ça reste bien plus longtemps dans ma tête qui si j'essayais de tout faire dans une semaine.

Lorsque la personne a identifié son style d'apprentissage préféré ainsi que ses forces, les questions peuvent devenir plus précises. Par exemple :

Audrey : "Vous disiez hier, que vous apprenez aussi en écoutant - que vous aimez écouter par exemple, des livres enregistrés, et tout simplement écouter l'enregistrement.

Pouvez-vous m'en dire un peu plus long?"

"Si, à l'époque, l'enseignant à l'internat vous avait dit : 'C'est comme ceci qu'un Anglais, ou que la culture blanche exprime la notion du temps, et c'est comme ceci que nous divisons le temps', cela vous aurait-il aidée, comme enfant apprenant l'Anglais?"

"Quel est le rapport le plus important entre l'enseignant et l'apprenant? (La réponse : "Je crois que ça serait de pouvoir s'entendre, de compter sur lui, de lui faire confiance... et que ça soit amusant.")

"Après les explications de l'enseignant, préférez-vous travailler seul?"

"Trouvez-vous que vous vous rappelez mieux de quelque chose si vous le voyez, l'entendez ou l'écrivez? Comment faites-vous pour vous rappeler de quelque chose?"

"Si vous achetez quelque chose et que vous l'assemblez - disons un cabinet - comment le faites-vous? Que faites-vous premièrement?"

"Lorsque vous étudiez la lecture et la rédaction, qu'est-ce qui vous semble le plus difficile à apprendre lorsqu'il s'agit de lire et d'écrire?"

"Quel lieu ou environnement trouvez-vous le plus propice à l'apprentissage d'un nouveau concept? Si vous aviez à choisir une salle de classe parfaite, de quoi aurait-elle l'air?"

(Joanne a répondu : "Et bien, je crois qu'il y aurait moins de gens. Pour moi, ça devient trop bruyant et je n'arrive plus à me concentrer. Si c'est trop bruyant je dis à l'enseignant: 'Hé, c'est trop bruyant ici. Je ne peux plus me concentrer.' Avant je portais des écouteurs en classe et je bloquais tout, ou bien, j'avais une belle musique douce sur mon Walkman - quelque chose d'apaisant parce que, s'il y a quelqu'un derrière moi qui parle, je veux l'écouter.")

"Savez-vous pourquoi vous avez eu des problèmes en lecture et en rédaction?"

(Joanne a répondu : "On m'a placée dans une école pour personnes handicapées, où l'on n'enseignait pas la lecture et la rédaction. Ils en faisaient un peu, mais pas beaucoup. Ce n'était pas l'école pour moi. Je suis une personne handicapée, mais mon intelligence n'est pas handicapée - je peux apprendre - donnez moi donc une chance.")

"Quelle serait la meilleure façon pour un enseignant qui n'est pas Autochtone et qui enseigne aux Autochtones, de venir à connaître le peuple et la culture autochtones?"

(Gabriel a répondu : "Et bien, je pense qu'il faut toujours apprendre à propos d'autres cultures, d'autres cultures autochtones - apprendre le plus possible, leurs coutumes, leur culture, surtout leur façon de penser... Une autre chose qui est importante que l'enseignant non-Autochtone reconnaisse, c'est que les Autochtones ont une attitude différente.")

"Croyez-vous que c'est parce que vous avez entendu - vous avez appris en écoutant quelqu'un, votre père vous racontait des choses, votre grand'mère vous racontait des histoires - croyez-vous que c'est une des raisons pour laquelle vous aimez apprendre en écoutant?"

Les questions les plus précises vous permettront d'identifier plus de détails du style général d'apprentissage. Votre propre compréhension de la théorie des styles d'apprentissage se manifestera dans vos questions et elle est essentiel pour mettre au point, par la suite, une stratégie d'enseignement.

3. <u>Les entrevues enregistrées :</u>

Si possible, utilisez un microphone externe afin d'avoir les meilleurs résultats possibles. Il est important que l'enseignant et l'apprenant puissent entendre les voix clairement.

Faites toujours un test d'essai préliminaire. Une copie de l'enregistrement devrait être disponible pour l'apprenant.

4. Transcrire l'entrevue :

   C'est un long processus, mais l'effort en vaut bien la peine. Vous tentez d'analyser une situation complexe. Vous devez comprendre la profondeur des mots ainsi que les liens entre les pensées. C'est plus sûr d'y aller avec ce qui a vraiment été dit qu'avec ce que vous vous rappelez d'avoir entendu.

5. Discuter du contenu de la conversation avec d'autres praticiens :

   Vous devez obtenir la permission de la personne interrogée avant de discuter de l'entrevue avec d'autres praticiens en alphabétisation. Si elle est obtenue, vous avez une excellente occasion pour collaborer sur les interprétations possibles.

   J'ai enregistré sur vidéo cassette la discussion de stratégies possibles pour le style d'apprentissage de Joanne et de Gabriel. (Une cassette est disponible, à tirage limité, auprès du Northern Literacy Project.) Chacun des six membres du groupe de discussion a été grandement inspiré par les multiples interprétations tirées d'une même source. Nous étions tous d'accord que notre stratégie collective était plus imaginative, plus sensible et plus juste que celles élaborées individuellement.

   Nous ne croyons pas toujours avoir le temps pour de telles collaborations, mais à la longue un bon plan de départ épargne beaucoup temps. Et encore plus important, si les stratégie d'apprentissage et d'enseignement sont bien adaptées à l'apprenant, la motivation et la persévérance seront maintenues.

6. Discuter des stratégies avec l'apprenant :

   À la fin, ce sera l'apprenant qui jugera si vous avez bien réussi à interpréter son style d'apprentissage préféré et si vous avez développé des stratégies adaptées à son style. Si vous réussissez, l'apprenant en sera très conscient. Ces stratégies, pouvant servir de base pour un contrat d'apprentissage, aideront à l'apprenant et à l'enseignant de rester sur la bonne piste lors de l'instruction individuelle.

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Développer les compétences en rédaction chez les apprenants adultes

William T. Fagan

En général, l'enseignement de la rédaction aux adultes a été influencé par les théories de Britton (1970) et Moffet (1968, 1985). Cependant, certains aspects de ces théories sont maintenant remis en cause quant à leur applicabilité à la compréhension du matériel rédigé par adultes et aussi par enfants (Coe, 1988; Newkirk, 1989). Tout tournait autour de la narration expressive ou la rédaction biographique ayant soi-même comme récepteur. Très souvent, cette technique de rédaction s'accompagne de la rédaction d'un journal dans lequel le récepteur devient une personne connue du rédacteur, souvent l'instructeur. Il n'y a aucun doute que pour les adultes qui développent un blocage à la rédaction, qui ne peuvent penser à dire quoi que ce soit, cette approche peut permettre à les aider à se sentir plus à l'aise avec la rédaction, à comprendre que tout ce qui peut être pensé et tout ce qui peut être exprimé, peut également, être écrit. Peter Elbow (1981), auteur de "Power of Writing", note aussi que coucher des idées sur papier et écrire à propos de soi-même, permet à l'individu de saisir la signification de ce qui est écrit pour ensuite donner plus aisément à la rédaction cette expression et cette capacité qui lui permettra d'être remarqué par le récepteur.

À moins que l'adulte ne veuille se lancer dans une carrière d'écrivain, beaucoup des adultes se sentent limités par cette forme de rédaction, surtout ceux qui s'inscrivent à des classes d'alphabétisation dans le but de développer des aptitudes dans une variété de formes de rédaction : qu'il s'agisse d'un formulaire, d'une note adressée au professeur d'un enfant, d'une liste d'épicerie ou d'une lettre personnelle. Ce qui suit décrit la façon dont la rédaction a été introduite pour un groupe d'adultes d'abord dans un genre narratif expressif et puisque le groupe en avait exprimé le désir, les apprenants passèrent ensuite à un genre de rédaction fontionnelle. Les trois adultes du groupe lisaient à un niveau situé entre la troisième et la cinquième année au début du programme et avaient d'eux–mêmes cherché de l'aide en lecture et en rédaction.

Introduction de la rédaction

La session débuta par une discussion sur les raisons d'écrire, laquelle donna lieu à une variéte de réponses y compris celle de la correspondance par lettres. Sur ce, l'instructeur émit l'idée : "si nous écrivions quelque chose". Les mines et le tollé des apprenants entraînèrent l'instructeur à leur demander : "Y aurait-il un problème à commencer?" (Il y en avait un.) "Qu'est-ce qui ne va pas?" Le problème le plus mentionné était celui de l'orthographe et le manque de sujets à aborder. La notion du récepteur a été évoquée par le biais des questions suivantes : "Lorsque quelqu'un écrit, une autre personne que celui qui écrit est souvent présente. Qui est-ce?" "Pourquoi vos rédactions vous causent–elles des inquiétudes?" La notion d'écriture pour soi-même fut évoquée. S'ensuivit une discussion sur la façon dont les obligations vis–à–vis du récepteur changent quand "soi-même" plutôt que "un autre" est le récepteur. Par contre, tous les apprenants insistèrent sur le fait que jamais ils n'écriraient pour eux-mêmes, même dans l'éventualité où ils écriraient à

propos d'eux-mêmes. En l'occurence, ils écriraient pour l'instructeur, qui, par après, les aiderait à améliorer le texte. Le rôle de l'instructeur en tant que réviseur était établi et les deux critères les plus importants pour évaluer les rédactions furent déterminés :

- une compréhension et une sensibilité par rapport aux idées
- les aspects techniques, y compris l'orthographe.

Un apprenant contesta l'ordre des critères et jugea que l'orthographe devrait avoir prépondérance. Quelle était la qualité de la rédaction la plus prisée du récepteur et quel était le rôle de l'orthographe dans la finition et la révision d'un texte. Ces questions furent amplement discutées avant d'en arriver à un accord sur l'ordre des critères. Les apprenants écrivirent. Voici un exemple du texte produit par Jean, une participante, qui illustre un style général et un autre style utilisé dans l'entretien d'un journal.

Ce soir après l'école, j'ai conduit Judy à la maison. Peu après être arrivée à la maison j'ai fait un peu de lessive avant d'aller me coucher. Il était environ 22 heures lorsque j'ai éteint les lumières. Buddy, mon chat a joué presque toute la nuit.
(Traduction libre du texte original)

<u>De la rédaction narrative à la rédaction descriptive</u>

Les inquiétudes à propos de l'orthographe ne s'arrêtèrent pas là. Cependant, on s'aperçut bientôt que ce n'était pas tant un problème d'orthographe qui créait des inquiétudes, mais plutôt la méconnaissance de savoir comment partager une expérience ou de fournir des détails. Pour les aider à régler ce dilemme on utilisa deux procédés.

On leur donna tout d'abord deux modèles de rédaction : l'un traitant "superficiellement" des sujets, l'autre fournissant d'amples détails et sujets à réflexion. On s'aperçut que les apprenants faisaient facilement la différence entre les deux textes. Par contre, il leur était toujours impossible de passer à l'étape suivante et de produire eux-mêmes des détails. S'ensuivit une discussion sur l'expérience, sur la façon dont on pourrait revivre cette expérience en évoquant les qui, que, quoi, quand, où et comment, les sentiments, etc... Le deuxième procédé avait pour effet de capitaliser sur cet aspect en leur fournissant une expérience commune. On leur montra, par exemple, la photo des obsèques d'un policier dans un quartier pauvre de New York. On leur donna trois indices pour arriver à fournir des détails.

Caractéristiques (quoi, où, qui)
Similitudes (ce que ça me rappelle)
Sentiments (ceux des acteurs et les miens)

Tous les points, résultat de la cogitation mutuelle, furent écrits au tableau sous les trois rubriques. Les adultes ne se sentaient pas encore capables de rédiger une description. Le problème fut ainsi illustré par l'un d'eux. "Si l'on me montre une pièce joliment meublée, je vais l'adorer. Par contre, si tous les meubles m'étaient donnés en vrac, je ne sais pas si je pourrais arriver au même résultat. J'ai besoin de l'aide concernant l'information au tableau; ce qui vient avant, après etc..."

L'étape suivante consistait à regrouper tous les points et à éliminer ceux qui étaient redondants. Les détails sur les gens, par exemple, furent regroupés - les policiers étaient en rangs de dix, il y avait moins de civils que de policiers, une haie d'honneur accompagnait le corbillard, quelques civils ne s'étaient pas arrêtés respectueusement, quelques personnes s'en étaient allées simplement, il y avait peut-être 1 000 policiers en tout, quelques civils ne s'étaient même pas arrêtés pour regarder. Ensuite, les détails furent mis en ordre - une haie d'honneur suivait le corbillard alors qu'environ 1 000 policiers étaient respectueusement alignés en rangs de dix. Il y avait moins de civils que de policiers. Quelques civils non seulement ne s'étaient pas arrêtés par respect, mais n'avaient même pas

regardé. Ensuite chaque apprenant commença à écrire.

On demanda aux apprenants de rédiger un autre texte par eux-mêmes, toujours centré sur les détails. Questionnée sur son premier texte, Jean décida d'écrire au sujet de son chat Buddy. Voilà ce qu'il en est résulté, ce qui constitue une amélioration considérable par rapport à son premier texte.

J'ai un chaton nommé Buddy. C'est un mâle. Buddy a du noir du gris et un peu de brun. Sur son nez et sur sa gueule il y a un petit peu de blanc. Mon ami Judy m'a donné Buddy. Lorsque j'ai déménagé de mon appartement à la maison que je loue maintenant, Judy s'en est occupée. Le premier jour que j'ai eu Buddy il avait peur. Je l'ai appelé Buddy parce qu'il y avait des amis ou des "buddys" à la maison le soir où je l'ai eu. Il allait vers tout le monde comme s'il était aussi un buddy, c'est comme ça qu'il a eu son nom. Buddy est né à la fin août. En novembre il a reçu sa première piqûre. Il était très brave; plus brave que je l'aurais été. Il est en bonne santé. En décembre je vais devoir l'emmener pour une deuxième piqûre; il sera bon alors pour une autre année. Si je ne suis pas debout à huit heures tous les jours, Buddy grimpe sur mon lit et me caresse la joue avec sa patte. Ça veut dire DEBOUT! J'AI FAIM. Buddy a un petit ours avec lequel il joue, je lui ai acheté plein de jouets pour jouer quand je suis au travail.
(Traduction libre du texte original)

Il était évident, à ce point-ci, que la difficulté de fournir des détails n'était pas uniquement responsable de la production de cette sorte de rédaction superficielle. L'autre difficulté venait du fait que les apprenants ne possédaient pas l'aptitude langagière pour pouvoir exprimer les détails. L'utilisation de l'adjectif, de la phrase, de la condition et de la comparaison pour exprimer le détail était une notion qui leur échappait. On tenta, pour les textes suivants, d'intégrer l'utilisation des structures langagières pour exprimer les détails avec la transposition du détail dans la langue écrite.

L'utilisation de la description en rédaction épistolaire

La discussion fut entamée après avoir écrit au tableau la question "Pourquoi écrire des lettres?". Une des raisons données voulait qu'une lettre soit "une causette par écrit; le partage d'une expérience sans intervention directe entre amis, une alternative à un appel téléphonique et moins chère en cas de communication interurbaine". On en est arrivé à considérer la FORME d'un appel téléphonique - les formules d'introduction et de clôture. De là, on en vint à la FORME d'une lettre qui fut ensuite l'objet d'une discussion. À la suite de commentaires et de questions, il fut parfois nécessaire de faire la comparaison entre une lettre personnelle et une lettre cordiale, une lettre d'affaire et une lettre formelle. En discutant du contenu ou du message d'une lettre, cela permetta aux apprenants de constater que cet aspect de la lettre était semblable à leurs conversations téléphoniques dans lesquelles ils fournissaient suffisamment de détails sur un ou des sujets afin de partager leurs expériences avec un ami. Des lettres servant d'exemples, avec ou sans détails, furent discutées.

On demanda ensuite aux apprenants de rédiger une lettre. Ils avaient le choix de s'adresser à un ami ou à l'instructeur. Le choix fut varié. Puisqu'ils étaient placés dans une situation d'apprentissage, le rôle de l'instructeur (qu'il fût ou non le destinataire ou un troisième parti d'une lettre écrite à un ami) fit l'objet d'une clarification. Si la lettre était adressée à l'instructeur, celui-ci répondrait par écrit comme un ami l'aurait fait, c'est-à-dire, il commenterait sur ce que l'auteur avait dit, ensuite il partagerait peut-être une de ses propres expériences. En plus, l'instructeur ferait aussi un

commentaire sur le message de la lettre, comme par exemple il préconiserait plus de détails à certains endroits et un commentaire sur la forme et les éléments. Si la lettre était adressée à un ami, seuls les deux derniers points seraient traités par l'instructeur.

Le cheminement des apprenants semblant s'effectuer sans à-coups, on aborda les lettres d'affaire. La rédaction descriptive fut également étudiée pour permettre une autre transition - la rédaction d'une description en bonne et due forme, particulièrement en réponse à des questions. Les apprenants continuaient toujours à trop s'inquiéter de l'orthographe. On demanda à chacun de tenir une liste de vocabulaire alors qu'en même temps on traitait des généralisations orthographiques.

Conclusion

Les instructeurs comme les apprenants ont énormément appris de cette expérience. Sans aucun doute, l'idée d'apprendre en unité en passant d'un style de rédaction à un autre, donne des résultats. Les apprenants semblent avoir contrôler la situation au lieu de se perdre lorsque la classe passa d'un style à l'autre. L'instructeur, lui, s'est rendu compte de l'importance de créer des situations d'apprentissage que les apprenants reconnaissaient, et de générer des discussions sur la validité de c ains styles de rédaction. L'instructeur a également appris à écouter et à remettre en question des notions qui voudraient que les apprenants adultes peuvent, sans hésitation, donner des détails sur leur existence pour après les coucher sur papier. L'instructeur apprit aussi que, pour ces adultes, la rédaction expressive aura non seulement servi à éliminer le blocage à la rédaction, mais aura également servi de tremplin pour passer à d'autres styles de rédaction en étoffant les compétences de rédaction.

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Kingston Literacy

par Jan Thiessen

Le Prix national de l'Alphabétisation 1989 a été décerné à Kingston Literacy, un organisme qui offre un programme d'instruction individuelle aux adultes de la région de Kingston en Ontario. La coordonnatrice du programme, le président du conseil et le président de l'organisme Students for Students étaient tous présents pour accepter le prix lors de l'assemblée annuelle du Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation.

Les programmes de Kingston Literacy existent depuis 1977. Quel genre de programmes? Comment se distinguent-ils des autres? Qu'avons-nous appris lors de ces dernières douze années?

En 1977, un sondage effectué dans la ville de Kingston a révélé que les programmes de perfectionnement pour adultes avaient besoin d'un enseignement supplémentaire à temps partiel. Un comité composé de représentants du Collège St. Lawrence, du Conseil d'éducation permanente de la région de Kingston et des bibliothèques, s'est assuré que des fonds soient accordés à ceux qui étaient en mesure de répondre aux besoins indiqués par le sondage. Un programme d'instruction individuelle, offert par bénévoles, fut né.

Le partenariat entre Kingston Literacy et le Collège St. Lawrence se poursuivi pendant sept ans. En 1984, grâce à des fonds prélevés par les apprenants et les enseignants, Kingston Literacy fut incorporé pour devenir une corporation à but non lucratif. Le conseil consultatif se transforma alors en comité de direction.

Le conseil actuel compte onze membres. La plus grande partie se compose d'enseignants et d'apprenants. Des institutions, des agences et des groupes communautaires y sont aussi représentés. Le conseil est responsable pour l'élaboration des objectifs, pour entreprendre l'évaluation, pour établir une politique, pour le prélèvement de fonds, pour la supervision du personnel, pour promouvoir l'alphabétisation au sein de la communauté, et pour assurer la coopération avec d'autres organismes intéressés au domaine de l'alphabétisation.

De certaines façons, Kingston Literacy est comme bien d'autres programmes dans lesquels un apprenant adulte est jumelé à un enseignant bénévole. La confiance, le respect réciproque et l'attention individuelle qui résultent donnent une expérience d'apprentissage couronnée de succès. Le résultat pour ces adultes est un plus haut niveau d'estime de soi et d'habiletés. 105 bénévoles ont travaillé au programme pour l'année 1988-1989.

Kingston Literacy est un projet d'envergure : 154 apprenants se sont inscrits en 1987-1988 et 232 en 1988-1989. Le centre Read-Write, ouvert en avril 1987, est le centre principal de Kingston Literacy. Il est ouvert cinq jours et quatre soirs par semaine. La plupart des équipes d'enseignant-apprenant assistent à ce centre puisque cela permet de réduire l'isolement des apprenants en leur offrant un milieu social. Par contre, d'autres arrangements peuvent être accommodés.

Le travail en petit groupe s'accroît. La participation au travail de groupe est facultative, mais les apprenants sont encouragés à participer jusqu'à ce que certains thèmes soient complétés. Les apprenants determinent eux-mêmes l'orientation de leurs études. Des questions d'actualité tels le libre-échange, les impôts et d'autres sujets sont traités. Un groupe ayant l'habileté de reconnaître des mots de vue (Sight Word Group) joigne leur appréciation de la musique western à diverses activités de lecture et de rédaction.

Read-Write II a ouvert ses portes en février 1988. Ce centre avec façade de plein-pied, dessert le nord de Kingston. De même qu'au centre principal, l'accent est sur le milieu d'apprentissage pour adultes et les heures sont souples.

La formation des enseignants a évoluée afin de répondre aux besoins des enseignants et des apprenants de Kingston Literacy. Les enseignants peuvent participer à des ateliers visant les besoins des apprenants au niveau d'alphabétisation préliminaire, l'individu qui est bon lecteur mais faible en rédaction, ou d'autres domaines précis. Les bénévoles peuvent participer soit aux sessions de formation ayant rapport à leurs besoins comme enseignants, ou soit à toutes les sessions offertes.

J'ai demandé à la coordonnatrice du programme, Carynne Arnold, pourquoi Kingston Literacy avait choisi des employés bénévoles plutôt que des employés rémunérés. Elle m'a renseigné sur les divers besoins des apprenants et sur les difficultés entourant le financement d'un personnel censé de travailler en groupe. Lors de ses premiers jours, le Collège St. Lawrence offrait des sessions de perfectionnement pour les enseignants embauchés à temps plein. Le rôle de Kingston Literacy est de rendre leurs programmes disponibles aux apprenants qui n'étaient pas capables ou qui ne voulaient pas apprendre en classe. Les centres Read-Write essayent de garder des heures d'ouverture souples et le personnel consacre le plus d'heures possibles à l'instruction individuelle. Ces efforts servent à répondre aux groupes d'apprenants qui désirent plus que quelques heures d'enseignement par semaine, mais qui ne satisfont pas aux exigences des programmes à temps plein.

Les besoins de ces apprenants ne sont pas facilement comblés par un programme d'enseignants bénévoles. Kingston Literacy a developpé quelques stratégies afin d'augmenter le temps consacré à l'instruction individuelle.

Le tiers des étudiants de Kingston Literacy utilise régulièrement les ordinateurs du programme. Un plus grand personnel d'appui est anticipé pour répondre à ce besoin. Les apprenants sont permis d'utiliser les centres Read–Write pour effectuer des études personnelles sans avoir à fixer un rendez–vous. Le travail en petit groupe est encouragé pour ceux qui désirent plus d'instruction.

Quels sont les aspects qui distinguent Kingston Literacy d'autres programmes? Le service aux apprenants a été maintenu en dépit des changements importants à la structure administrative ainsi que d'autres situations difficiles. Le programme continue à évoluer au rythme des besoins des apprenants.

Le personnel rémunéré de Kingston Literacy travaille avec chaque étudiant pendant environ trois semaines avant de le jumeler à un enseignant. Une évaluation, l'établissement de buts et une orientation sont nécessaires avant que l'instruction individuelle ne puissent commencer. Les étudiants sont interviewés périodiquement et leur satisfaction avec tous les aspects du programme est discutée. Ils sont aussi encouragés à participer aux activités du Conseil.

L'organisation Students for Students est puissante. Ce groupe se rencontre mensuellement pour discuter des améliorations qui pourraient être portées au Centre en tant que lieu de travail. Des excursions à d'autres centres d'alphabétisation permettent aux apprenants d'assister à des événements d'intérêt. Lorsque les apprenants se présentent aux élections, il y a beaucoup d'intérêt.

Kingston Literacy s'intéresse également au travail cummunautaire. Les hommes sont plus nombreux que les femmes parmi les apprenants et :

> "croyant fermement [qu'elles ont] une forte influence sur le niveau d'alphabétisation de la génération prochaine, on a

décidé de recruter les mères de famille et delaborer des programmes qui répondraient à leurs besoins."

(Traduction libre d'un extrait du Rapport Annuel de Kingston Literacy 1988)

Cette étape a entrainé plusieurs projets. La facilité de lire certains livrets d'information a été évaluée. Certains projets spéciaux de rédaction ont été entamés. Les femmes du groupe communautaire expriment leurs besoins et de là, la programmation est développée. Un des projets spéciaux a été de développer des matériels faciles à lire sur le rôle des parents.

La levée de fonds est importante à la survie de Kingston Literacy. Il est essentiel d'exercer des pressions auprès des gouvernements pour maintenir leur appui financier. Jusqu'à date, le financement n'a pas encore été réduit, mais de plus grands engagements financiers sont nécessaires. La planification à long terme n'est qu'un exercice académique si l'appui financier est réduit.

Un encan de livres d'auteurs célèbres est un des événements de la campagne de levée de fonds organisée par le programme. Il y a plusieurs avantages qui découlent de ce projet. Carynne Arnold dit que le plus grand avantage se trouve dans la sensibilisation accrue au sein du grand public. Quelqu'un qui fait don d'un livre pourrait s'intéresser à devenir enseignant. Alors que leur niveau de sensibilisation augmente, tous les bénévoles du Comité participent à l'organisation de la levée de fonds. Ceci libère les employés rémunérés et augmente la sensibilité du public en ce qui concerne l'alphabétisation des adultes.

Quel est le thème de Kingston Literacy? Selon Carynne Arnold c'est la sensibilisation de la communauté à l'égard de l'alphabétisation :

"C'est à nous de voir à la participation communautaire afin que l'alphabétisation puis devenir un droit de la personne. Nous devons reconnaître notre appui financier - nous ne devons pas être si occupés avec l'élaboration des programmes que nous oublions de faire pression et de nous préoccuper de la sensibilisation du public." (Traduction libre)

Un des éléments qui marque le succès de Kinston Literacy est la préoccupation des besoins communautaires et que ceux–ci sont également communiqués aux administrateurs par les apprenants adultes inscrits au programme. Ce programme tente d'éviter de foncer dans le noir et offrant des programmes que seuls les administrateurs jugent importants. Kingston Literacy évolue toujours. Le récipiendaire du Prix national de l'Alphabétisation 1989 cherche à connaître les besoins de tous en posant des questions. Encore plus important, Kingston Literacy agit sur les réponses.

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L'Elaboration de lignes directrices sur les methodes effectives d'enseignement en matière d'alphabétisation

"Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit"

Un article critique par Susan Hoddinott

Dans son adresse au Séminaire national sur l'alphabétisation en 1987, Serge Wagner du Québec présentait l'alphabétisation comme sortant de "l'ère des pionniers" et s'entretenait de la nécessité pour ces mêmes "pionniers de trouver de nouveaux moyens d'organiser leurs activités en alphabétisation". Les conditions *sine qua non* pour réaliser cette évolution, selon lui, étaient d'attribuer une aide plus adéquate, d'augmenter la responsabilité du gouvernement, bref de conférer au movement de l'alphabétisation plus de légitimité. L'audience, composée pour la majeure partie de praticiens, accueillit favorablement ses commentaires quoique la majorité de ceux-ci ne partageait pas son optimisme ni sa perception d'une situation en voie d'amélioration. Parmi ceux qui avaient œuvré pendant dix ans ou plus dans un environnement "de pionniers" pour ne pas dire primitif, le sentiment était qu'une amélioration aurait dû se produire, quoique lorsqu'ils considéraient leur programme, peu de progrès significatifs était évident. La plupart avait subi des compressions budgétaires et de recul inévitable pendant leur carrière de praticien en alphabétisation. Cependant, les commentaires et l'intervention de Serge Wagner lançaient un appel fondamental à tous les praticiens et les défenseurs de l'alphabétisation à faire sortir celle-ci de "l'ère des pionniers" en insistant publiquement pour que ce secteur de l'éducation bénéficie des mêmes ressources, de la même attention et de la même appréciation que les autres secteurs en éducation.

Les praticiens et les défenseurs de l'alphabétisation commencent à se rendre compte, comme beaucoup d'entre eux l'avaient déjà constaté en 1987, qu'en dépit de leurs meilleures intentions, ils doivent accepter une part de la responsabilité dans la dégradation continue et le sous-financement perpétuel de l'alphabétisation. Beaucoup d'entre eux commencent à admettre que les attitudes qui prônent que l'on doit "faire avec les moyens du bord" et "faire de son mieux" qui étaient, par nécessité, lieu commun chez la plupart des pourvoyeurs de l'alphabétisation, ont contribué à perpétuer l'existence de programmes en mal de ressources et même de les rendre acceptables. Serge Wagner s'en était rendu compte dès 1987 et avait demandé aux praticiens de commencer à considérer leur métier de façon critique et d'être prêts à admettre que dans bien des domaines, les programmes en place n'étaient pas réussis. Il notait qu'afin de justifier les activités de l'alphabétisation et les demandes de fonds supplémentaires, les praticiens et les organisateurs, faisaient souvent appel aux expériences couronnées de succès; une stratégie qui peut avoir un effet contraire et en laissant croire au public qu'il est possible sinon normal pour un programme d'alphabétisation de survivre en dépit de ressources limitées. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que les fonctionnaires chargés de l'élaboration de la politique et du financement des programmes d'alphabétisation se contentent d'accepter ce message.

Mais la politique de l'alphabétisation et sa défense ont évoluées au cours des cinq dernières années au point où certains indices laissent à penser qu'elle est en train de s'éloigner de "l'ère des pionniers". Le concept, par exemple de "méthodes effectives" en alphabétisation - la

condition *sine qua non* de succès réel - devient de plus en plus monnaie courrante. Alors qu'il y a dix ans, beaucoup étaient convaincus que l'objectif principal des efforts de promotion était d'augmenter l'accès aux programmes d'alphabétisation, ces mêmes personnes pensent aujourd'hui qu'il est également important d'en assurer la qualité. On s'accorde aujourd'hui pour reconnaître le besoin d'établir une méthode objective pour évaluer les programmes ainsi que pour le financement et la gestion de ceux–ci.

En 1984, La "Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit" au Royaume Uni a publié, un document important intitulé "Organizing Provision: Good Practice in Adult Literacy and Basic Skills" dans lequel figurent des recommandations adressant tous les domaines de l'alphabétisation tels le personnel, le financement et l'administration. Les recommandations indiquent clairement que si l'alphabétisation doit devenir une réalité, les autorités responsables de l'éducation qui, au Royaume Uni, sont en grande mesure responsables de la provision des services, les programmes d'alphabétisation devront faire preuve de la même qualité que l'on retrouve dans d'autres domaines d'éducation. La publication du document de l'ALBSU fut accueillit avec enthousiasme et avec un souffle de soulagement au Canada. Enfin, une publication gouvervementale qui reconnaît que l'alphabétisation a sa place bien méritée dans un système d'éducation de qualité adéquatement financé. Il était évident que le Canada avait un besoin urgent d'un tel document. C'est la raison pour laquelle le Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation, par l'entremise de son comité chargé de l'élaboration de la politique, commença en 1988 à rédiger un tel document.

Dans le c 're de la recherche effectuée pour la rédaction d'un document canadien sur une méthode effective, le comité chargé de l'élaboration de la politique du RCA s'engagea à collectionner des documents qui, au Canada, traitaient de l'évaluation et de la politique sur l'alphabétisation. Jusqu'à date, le comité s'est rendu compte qu'en dépit du fait que souvent les praticiens, les conseils scolaires ou les administrateurs s'efforcent d'effectuer des évaluations objectives de leurs programmes, ils doivent se débrouiller sans avoir à leur disposition des critères valables, pour la simple et bonne raison que ces critères n'existent pas au Canada. Seule exeption notable à la règle est en Colombie Britannique, où le ministère de l'Education supérieure, le ministère de la Science et de la Technologie et le Secrétariat de l'alphabétisation nationale ont publié un document dans lequel on trouve un modèle de méthodes d'évaluation et de méthodologie. On doit cet ouvrage intitulé "Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit" à Audrey M. Thomas, membre fondatrice du Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation et auteure d'études majeures dans ce domaine au Canada. Cet ouvrage sur l'alphabétisation, fruit de la compréhension de Mme Thomas des problèmes de l'alphabétisation tant au Canada qu'à l'étranger, et qui témoigne de sa connaissance étendue du sujet, pourrait bien être considéré comme le document clé sur l'alphabétisation au Canada dans les années 1980.

L'ouvrage contient 17 énoncés sur les méthodes effectives constituant les attributions de l'évaluation des programmes. La valeur utilitaire de l'ouvrage en tant qu'outil en évaluation découle du fait qu'il ne se limite pas à l'énoncé de formules vagues, mais tente de définir les conditions qui sous–tendent ces énoncés. À titre d'exemple, le passage traitant de méthodes effectives sur le choix de matériels explique qu' "Un programme de qualité en alphabétisation pour adultes veut que soit utilisée une large gamme de matériels éducatifs axés sur les besoins des adultes et conforme à la philosophie du programme, aussi bien qu'une large gamme de matériels d'appoint et de ressource", est suivi de douze conditions nécessaires à l'atteinte de cet objectif y compris l'utilisation d'une grande variété de documents éducatifs "authentiques", de matériels conçu pour adultes, de matériels

sans préjudice (sexe, ethnie, âge), de matériels récents et de matériels avec un contenu canadien. L'évaluation comprend un système de mesure qui rendrait difficile le camouflage des déficiences des programmes. Par exemple, la section sur le matériel permet un score de cinq si le programme répond aux douze conditions, ou un score de quatre si le programme répond à entre neuf à douze conditions et ainsi de suite. Les programmes qui ne se limitent qu'à un nombre établi de manuels, de programmes de lecture ou de logiciels, n'obtiennent qu'une note de un sur cinq.

L'ouvrage fait état de trois outils d'évaluation : un questionnaire sur le programme, un questionnaire pour l'enseignant, et un autre pour l'apprenant. L'auteure indique ainsi dans le guide de l'utilisateur *"Le processus d'évaluation du programme fournit des moyens pour identifier les points forts et de diagnostiquer les points faibles. Lorsque rassemblés, les questionnaires de l'enseignant et de l'apprenant donnent la possibilité de confirmer la véracité du score du questionnaire sur les programmes."*

(Traduction libre de la citation originale)

Bien que la trousse d'évaluation soit spécifiquement destinée aux programmes, et bien que son utilité soit fonction de la finalité que l'évaluateur veut bien lui prêter, elle constitue l'étalon tant attendu pour mesurer le rendement des apprenants dans les programmes qui s'efforcent de répondre à leurs besoins. Et si, comme le dit l'auteure, la trousse est utilisée de la façon dont elle devrait l'être, elle permettra de changer la direction des méthodes courantes face à la politique et aux méthodes de financement. Au dire d'Audrey Thomas *"Lorsque les priorités auront été établies, les décisions peuvent alors servir de base dans les soumissions de programmes proposés aux bailleurs de fonds ce qui prouve que la pratique pédagogique peut aider à déterminer le niveau de financement."*

(Traduction libre de la citation originale)

La nécessité pour le Canada d'avoir un document sur les méthodes effectives tel que l'envisage le Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation, est toujours présent. La nécessité existe toujours d'établir des directives et des normes adéquates visant la responsabilité du public en matière d'alphabétisation, les niveaux de financement, les ressources ou les conditions de travail au sein des programmes. L'énoncé sur les méthodes effectives contenu dans ce texte, constitue par contre, un point de départ et un modèle pour l'élaboration d'un tel document.

Bien que cette trousse ait été développée comme un outil d'évaluation pour les progammes d'enseignants bénévoles, son utilisation n'est absolument pas restreinte au secteur du bénévolat. La plupart des sections se prête également aux programmes employant des enseignants rémunérés. La trousse pourrait d'ailleurs porter une aide précieuse à tous ceux qui s'intéressent à la mise sur pied ou à l'amélioration d'une programmation en alphabétisation. On peut s'en procurer un exemplaire auprès de:
Provincial Curriculum Publications, a/s Open Learning Agency, Marketing Department, C.P 94000, Richmond (C.B.) V6Y 2A2.

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THROUGH OUR EYES

Compte rendu de Doug Rankin, Alphabétisation de base, Kitchener, Ontario.

J'ai présenté ce recueil d'histoires et de poèmes rédigés par des apprenants aux cinq adultes qui participent à des séances de groupe deux après-midi par semaine. "Feuilletez-le. Il a été écrit par des apprenants manitobains."

La publication suscita de l'intérêt auprès de la plupart des adultes (tout comme pour la plupart des matériels produits par des apprenants). Mais cette fois, j'ai été quelque peu surpris : la typographie de Through Our Eyes, imprimée par ordinateur est généralement impopulaire puisqu'elle est plus difficile à lire que la typographie plus précise d'une imprimante laser. Cependant, cela ne nous a pas empêchés d'y prendre plaisir. Malheureusement, il n'y a pas de photos dans cette publication, et l'art graphique trop ordinaire, ne m'a pas impressionné. Mais *Through Our Eyes* a été lu par les adultes du groupe et certains d'entre eux voulaient avoir une photocopie d'un poème ou d'une histoire afin de pouvoir la relire plus tard. Voici quelques uns de leurs commentaires :

"C'est une belle couverture. Ça ressemble à un livre."

"C'est un joli poème. Ça me rappelle des souvenirs de mon enfance ainsi que les enfants que je nourris et que je prends dans mes bras à l'hôpital K-W dans le pavillon des enfants."

"Ce dessin me fait penser à une histoire que j'ai écrite au sujet d'un tatouage aigle."

Un véritable intérêt s'est manifesté pour ces histoires, poèmes et dessins créés par des adultes autochtones du projet Powerview. Ils ont servi à entamer des discussions sur les coutumes et l'art autochtones. Une femme autochtone du groupe nous a parlé de sa vie sur une réserve. Elle nous a raconté ses souvenirs d'un breuvage à la moutarde et au miel qui guérit le rhume.

Tous ont lu un poème ou une histoire préférée au groupe, certains avec un peu d'aide d'un partenaire, d'autres seuls. C'était amusant et parfois émouvant. Un poème que j'ai premièrement lu et trouvé didactique et un peu simple, a été transformé lorsqu'il a été lu par une voix déterminée et qui a été entendu par un groupe silencieux touché par les paroles d'un autre apprenant. Ce qui fait que *Through Our Eyes* a été si important, c'est que les paroles des apprenants ont provoqué chez nous des sentiments profonds.

***Doug Rankin** est avec Core Literacy à Kitchener, Ontario.*

Questions provinciales

par Robin Millar

Comité d'édition

Les nouvelles directions qui suivent ont été tirés de Rapports provinciaux, soumis à la Réunion du conseil du Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation en octobre 1989. Ces nouvelles directions ne sont nullement compréhensives, mais semblent être basées sur un certain nombre de sujets en train d'émerger dans plusieurs provinces.

Comités consultatifs provinciaux

Les raisons qui ont mené à l'établissement des comités consultatifs provinciaux varient d'une province à l'autre. Dans certains cas, les provinces ont établi des comités d'alphabétisation pour diriger ou coordonner la programmation offerte parmi plusieurs ministères gouvernementaux. Dans d'autres cas, les comités consultatifs reçoivent un mandat plus large leur permettant d'aviser le gouvernement sur les initiatives et les besoins en matière d'alphabétisation. Dans certaines provinces, telle la Saskatchewan, le comité de l'alphabétisation est devenu une fondation et a fourni la poussée nécessaire pour générer des activités de levée de fonds.

Programmation en matière d'alphabétisation pour Autochtones

Quoique le peuple autochtone peut avoir une présence dans n'importe quelle programmation en matière d'alphabétisation, certaines provinces se chargent de l'élaboration de matériels qui répondent aux besoins des communautés autochtones. Ces matériels peuvent inclure l'élaboration de typographie plus variée pour promouvoir l'alphabétisation dans la langue maternelle, telle celle en voie de développement dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest; le développement communautaire; l'accès à l'éducation continue; l'élaboration de matériels d'intérêt spécifiques pour le peuple autochtone.

Conférences et événements pour apprenants

Plusieurs provinces tentent de rassembler les apprenants par l'entremise d'événements destinés aux apprenants ou par des conférences provinciales, telle la Conférence annuelle des apprenants au Manitoba. Le Comité des apprenants du Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation vous invite à partager tout renseignement ou commentaire au sujet de ces événements.

Initiatives publicitaires

Au cours des dernières années, un certain nombre de provinces ont réalisé des vidéos pour diffusion publique, visant à fournir de l'information sur l'alphabétisation et à attirer des étudiants et des bénévoles éventuels. Des nouvelles affiches et des informations publicitaires sont disponibles sur l'Année internationale de l'alphabétisation et sur la disponibilité de programmes locaux. La Ontario Literacy Coalition a des T-shirts de l'A.I.A. à vendre.

De plus amples renseignements sont disponibles au bureau du Rassemblement canadien pour l'alphabétisation.

Robin Millar est spécialiste en apprentissage pour adultes au Bureau de l'alphabétisation, ministère de l'Education et de la Formation professionelle, au sein du Gouvernement du Manitoba. Elle siege également sur le Comité d'édition du RCA

En bref

L'Université Brock

Étant donné qu'il existe un intérêt croissant dans l'alphabétisation familiale, Adele Thomas de l'Université Brock a reçu une subvention préliminaire du Conseil des recherches en sciences humaines du Canada pour enquêter sur les projets d'alphabétisation familiale du Canada. À cause de la nature variée de ces programmes, on a besoin d'aide pour juger de l'ampleur des efforts canadiens dans ce nouveau domaine important d'alphabétisation. Pouvez-vous offrir votre assistance?

Si vous faites partie d'un organisme qui participe aux programmes d'alphabétisation familiale ou que vous participez indivduellement, veuillez envoyer une courte description de votre programme ou de votre rôle à l'adresse suivante au Docteur Adele Thomas, Département d'Éducation, Université Brock, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2S 3A1. Prière d'inclure l'information suivante : le commanditaire du programme, la nature de l'activité d'alphabétisation et l'importance de la participation familiale.